

# STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 133

IT WAS ALIEN, HUGE AND  
WOULDN'T COMMUNICATE.  
IT WAS ON A COLLISION  
COURSE WITH EARTH, AND  
THERE SEEMED NO WAY  
OF STOPPING IT . . .

22p

**DEATH  
CAME  
SILENTLY!**





# STARSLAYER

THE PLANET, HEBUS, WAS SO FAR OUT IN DEEP SPACE, THAT EARTH'S ASTRONOMERS COULD NOT EVEN BEGIN TO SUSPECT ITS PRESENCE. HEBUS WAS PEOPLED BY AN ANCIENT AND VERY ADVANCED RACE OF SCHOLAR-WARRIORS. OVER EONS OF TIME THEY HAD CONQUERED THEIR ENVIRONMENT, SPREAD THEIR INFLUENCE THROUGHOUT THE SYSTEM OF WHICH THEY WERE PART. BUT NOW THEY FACED A MENACE THEY COULD NOT CONTROL. HEBUS WAS DOOMED, AND BECAUSE OF THAT, EARTH WAS PLACED IN TERRIBLE DANGER.

# DEATH CAME SILENTLY!

IN THE CHAMBER OF ELDERS ON HEBUS, THE RULING BODY HAD TO MAKE A DREADFUL DECISION.

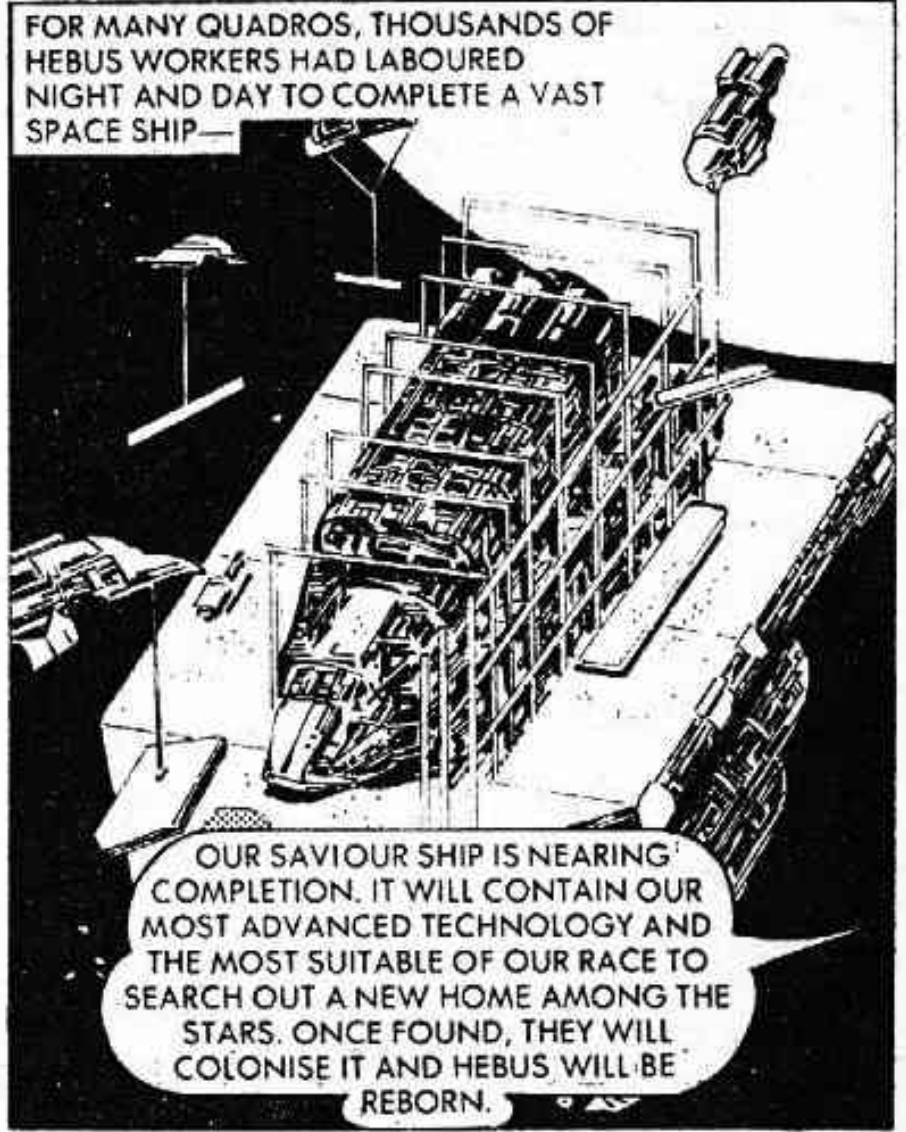
OVER THE NEXT FEW UNITS THE SUN WILL COOL AND DIE—AND US WITH IT. THERE IS NOTHING THAT CAN BE DONE TO PREVENT THE CATASTROPHE. HEBUS AND THE REMAINDER OF THIS UNIVERSE WILL BE WIPED OUT. IT IS FOR US TO DECIDE WHO LIVES AND WHO DIES.





THE SUN THAT HAS NURTURED US THROUGH ALL THESE MANY, MANY QUADROS OF TIME, HAS RUN ITS COURSE. OUR PLANET IS DOOMED, BUT WE WILL NOT LET OUR RACE BECOME EXTINCT. ALREADY A CONTINGENCY PLAN IS UNDER WAY.

FOR MANY QUADROS, THOUSANDS OF HEBUS WORKERS HAD LABOURED NIGHT AND DAY TO COMPLETE A VAST SPACE SHIP—



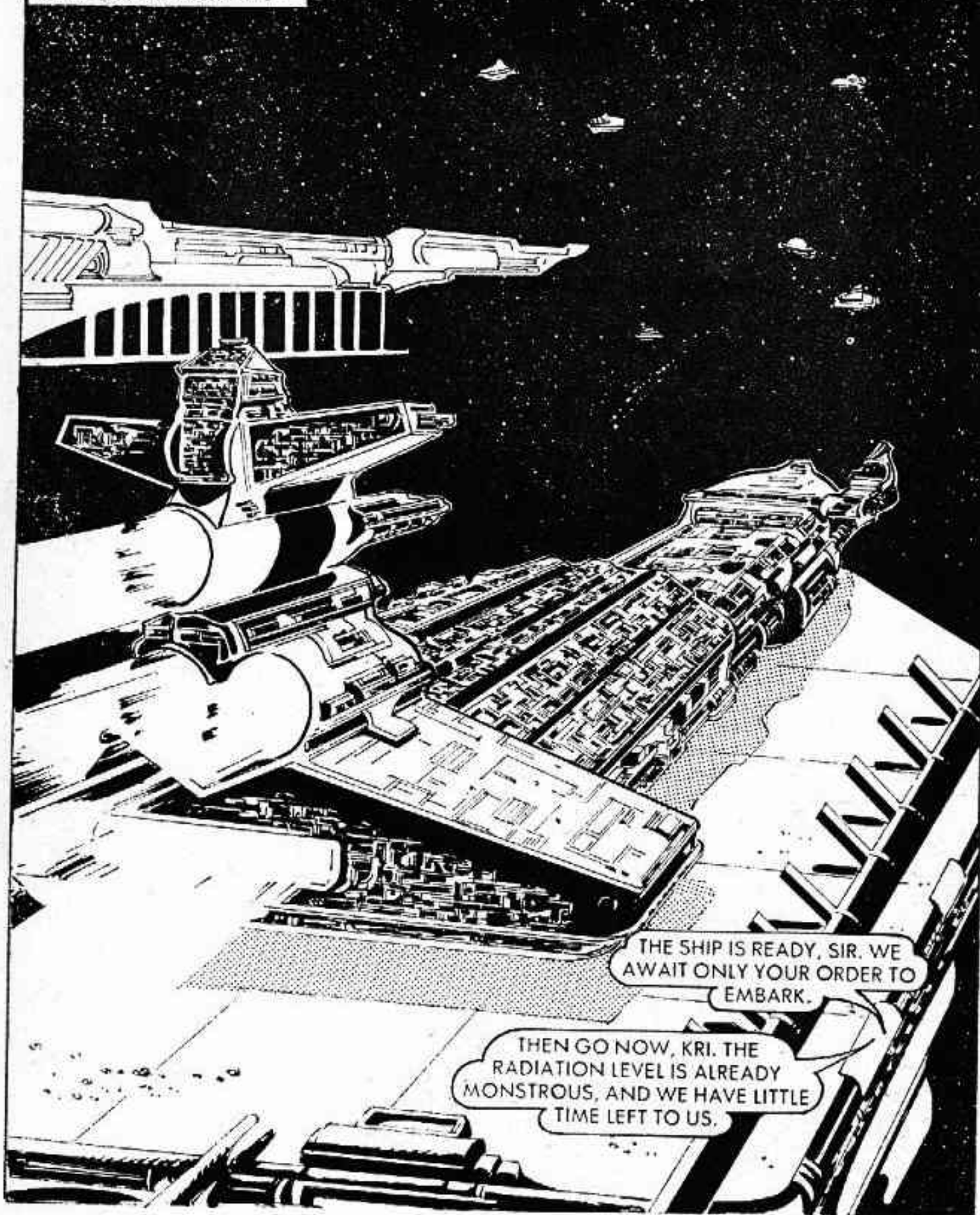
OUR SAVIOUR SHIP IS NEARING COMPLETION. IT WILL CONTAIN OUR MOST ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AND THE MOST SUITABLE OF OUR RACE TO SEARCH OUT A NEW HOME AMONG THE STARS. ONCE FOUND, THEY WILL COLONISE IT AND HEBUS WILL BE REBORN.

THE MEETING CONTINUED, AND ONCE THE DECISION WAS MADE THE COUNCIL-MEN LEFT THE GREAT CHAMBER, WENT TO THEIR HOMES, THEIR FAMILIES, AND WAITED, FOR THOSE WHO HAD BEEN SELECTED.

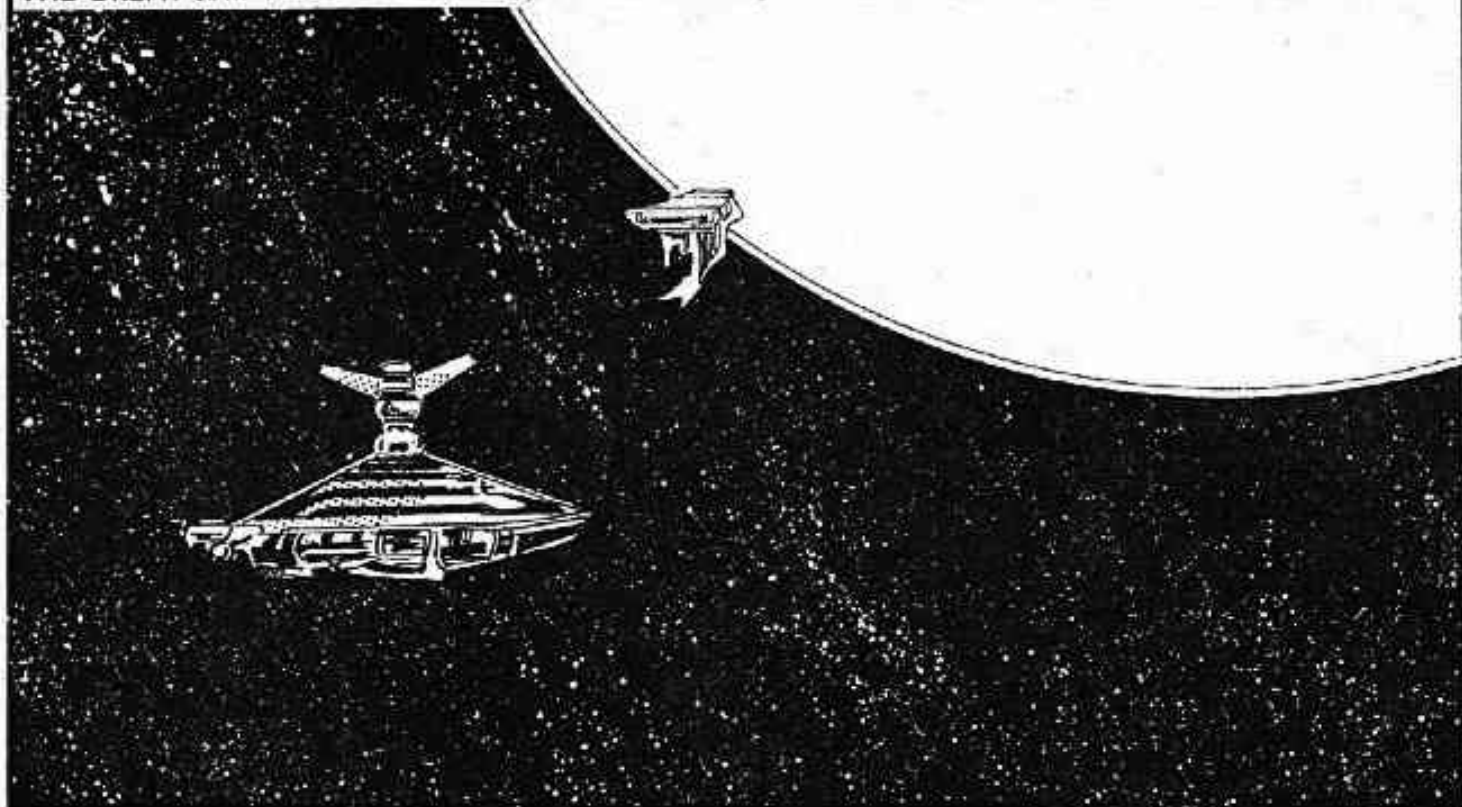
KRI, YOU ARE READY, YOU AND YOUR PARTY? YOU CONCUR WITH THE PURPOSE OF YOUR MISSION?

YES, GRANDFATHER, ALL IS CLEAR. WE WILL LEAVE ALTHOUGH IT WILL NOT BE EASY.

FINALLY IT WAS TIME TO LEAVE THE DOOMED SYSTEM, AND THE HUGE STARSHIP'S WARP ENGINES IGNITED—



THE GREAT SHIP MOVED AWAY FROM THE PLANET, AND SET A COURSE FOR THE STARS.



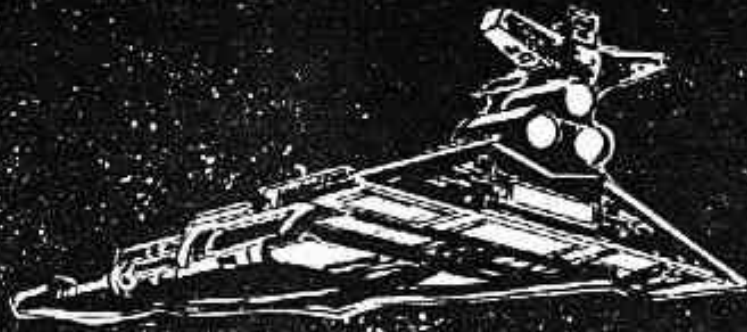
LATER, BEFORE THE CHOSEN HEBUS SETTLED INTO CRYOGENIC CHAMBERS—



IT IS ALMOST TIME TO GET INTO OUR CHAMBERS. IT IS TIME FOR THE LONG SLEEP, MY FRIENDS, BUT BEFORE SLEEP, LET US REMEMBER THE BRAVE ONES WE HAVE LEFT BEHIND . . . AND VOW NEVER TO TARNISH THEIR PROUD MEMORIES.

THE MEN STOOD, LOST IN THOUGHT, THEN CLIMBED INTO THE BANKED REFRIGERATION CHAMBERS WHICH WOULD REDUCE THEIR BODY METABOLISM AND CUT THEIR AGEING TO MERE MOMENTS.

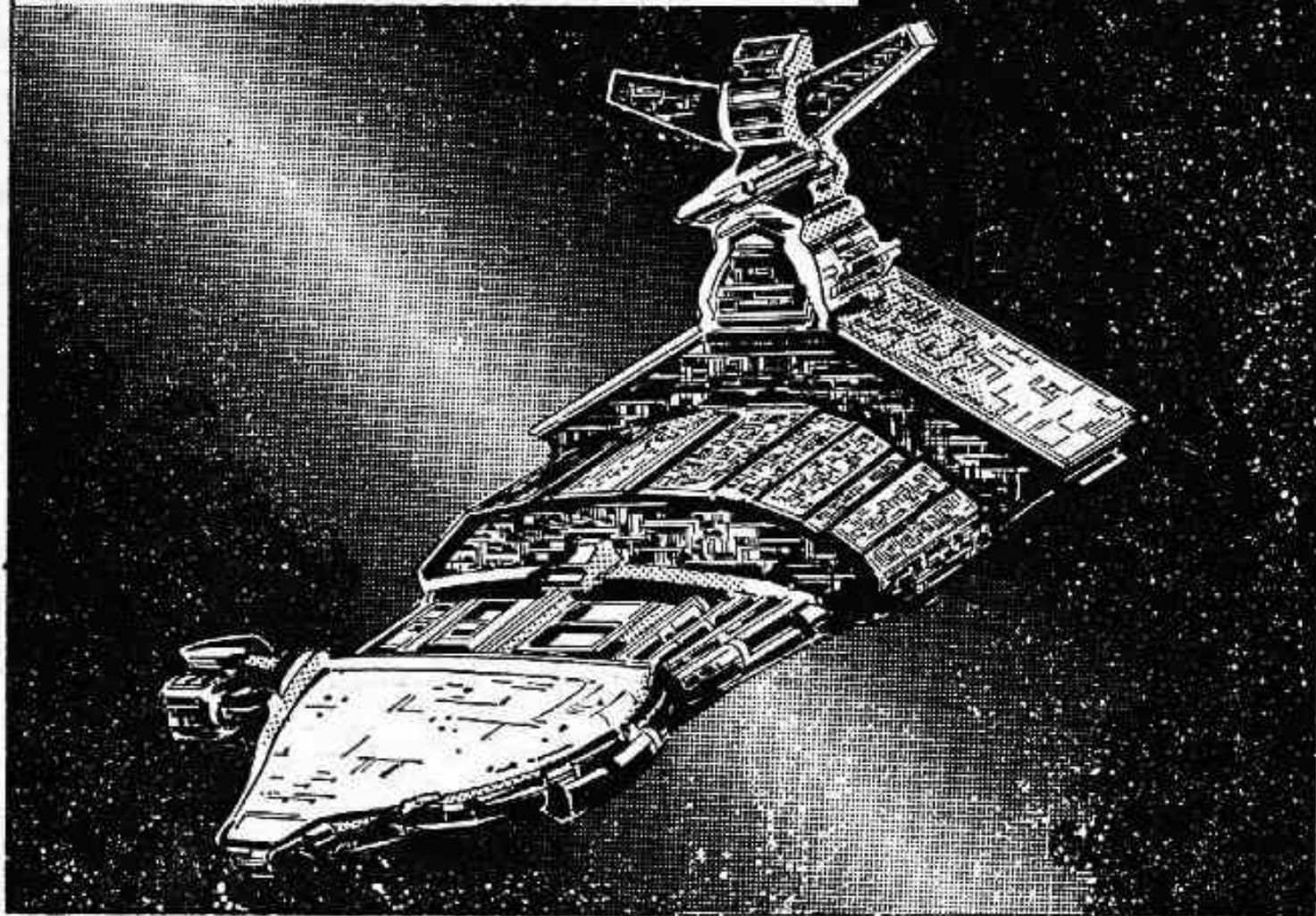
THEN THE SHIP SLID INTO HYPERSPACE, LEAVING FOREVER THE DOOMED SYSTEM—



EVEN AS THE WAVES OF DISTORTION SETTLED BEHIND THE CRAFT, GRAVITATIONAL FORCES CAUSED ENORMOUS STRESSES THAT RESULTED IN A COMPLETE DISINTEGRATION OF THE SYSTEM.



TIME SLID PAST THE MIGHTY HULL OF THE SHIP. INSIDE, AN ARMY OF ROBOTS ATTENDED TO THE DAILY TASK, WATCHING OVER THE SHIP AND ITS SLEEPERS.

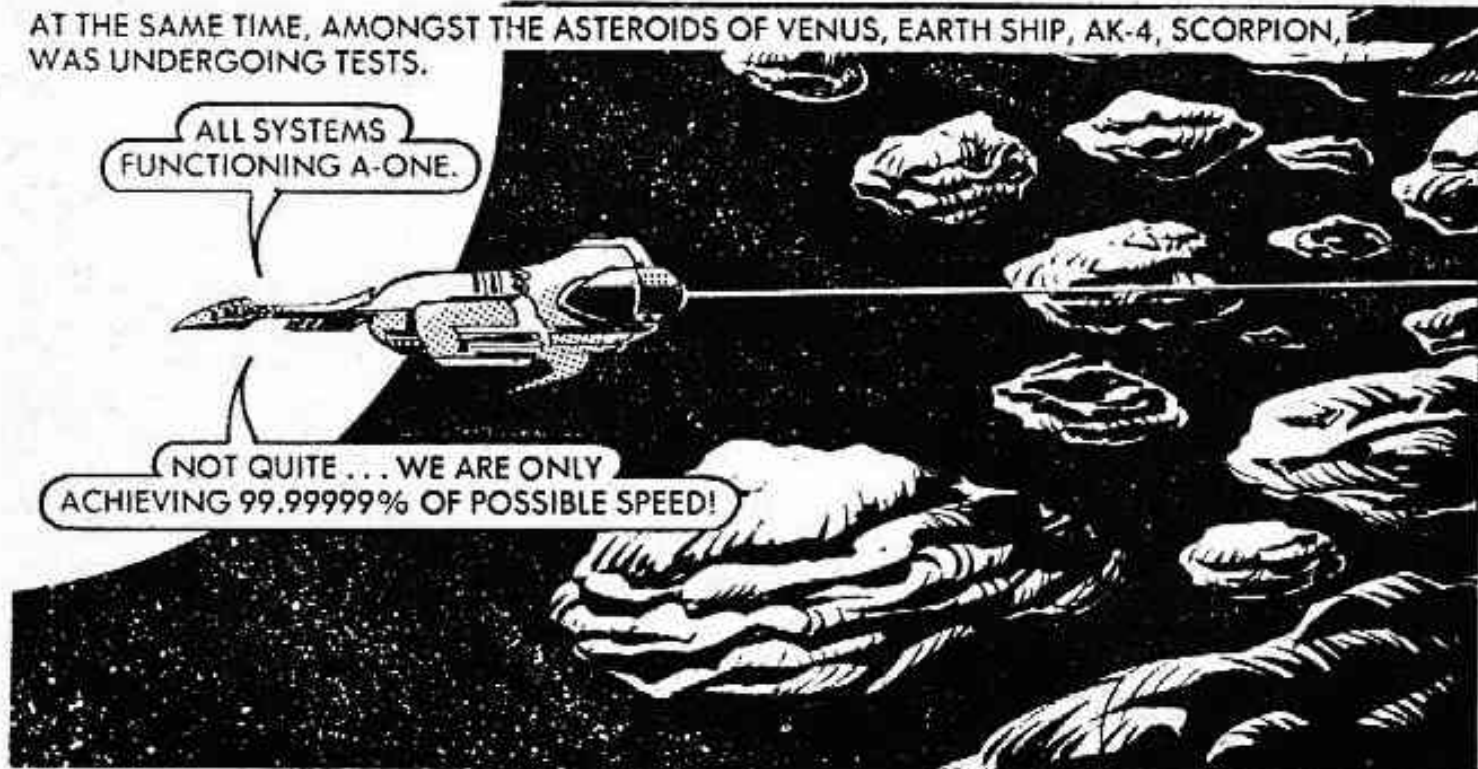


AT THE SAME TIME, AMONGST THE ASTEROIDS OF VENUS, EARTH SHIP, AK-4, SCORPION, WAS UNDERGOING TESTS.

ALL SYSTEMS  
FUNCTIONING A-ONE.




NOT QUITE... WE ARE ONLY  
ACHIEVING 99.99999% OF POSSIBLE SPEED!






DEREK CURRIE WAS THE ON-BOARD ENGINEER AND A SPECIALIST IN SPACECRAFT DESIGN.



DEREK—BELT UP!  
SHE'S PERFECT!

PILOT LUKE GREGG STEERED EASILY AMONG THE ASTEROIDS.

BUT ON AN ASTEROID LURKED TROUBLE—



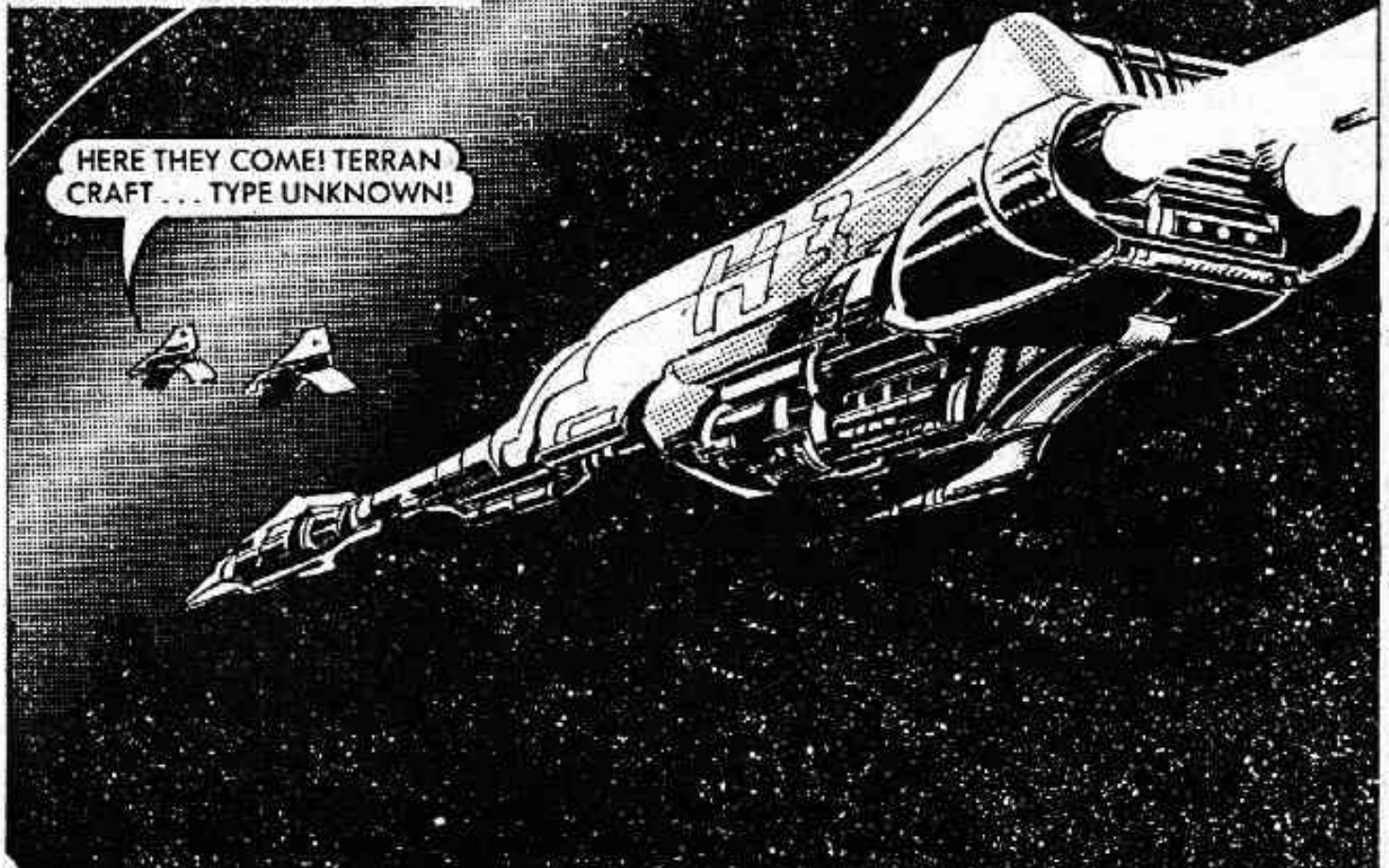
... CONTROL CALLING SCORPION. REPORTS OF  
SPACE PIRATES IN YOUR SECTOR. THEIR SHIPS ARE B.A.  
MIG-FLEAS. THIS GROUP IS A KNOWN KILLER SQUADRON  
... WATCH IT!

... SCORPION TO  
CONTROL... UNDERSTOOD!

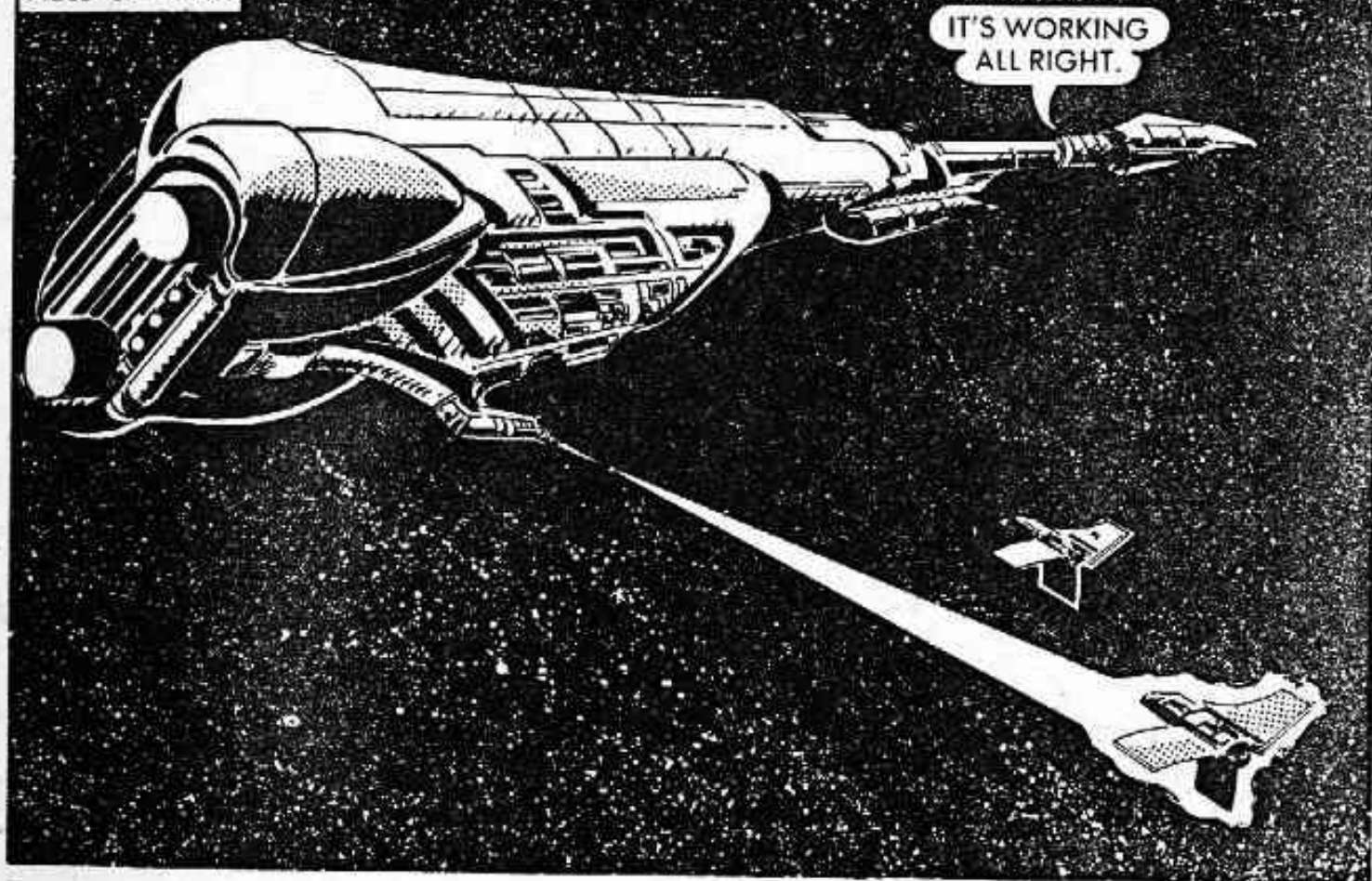
AS SCORPION SWEEP THROUGH THE ETHER OF SPACE, ITS AUTOSYSTEMS PICKED UP ION TRAILS—



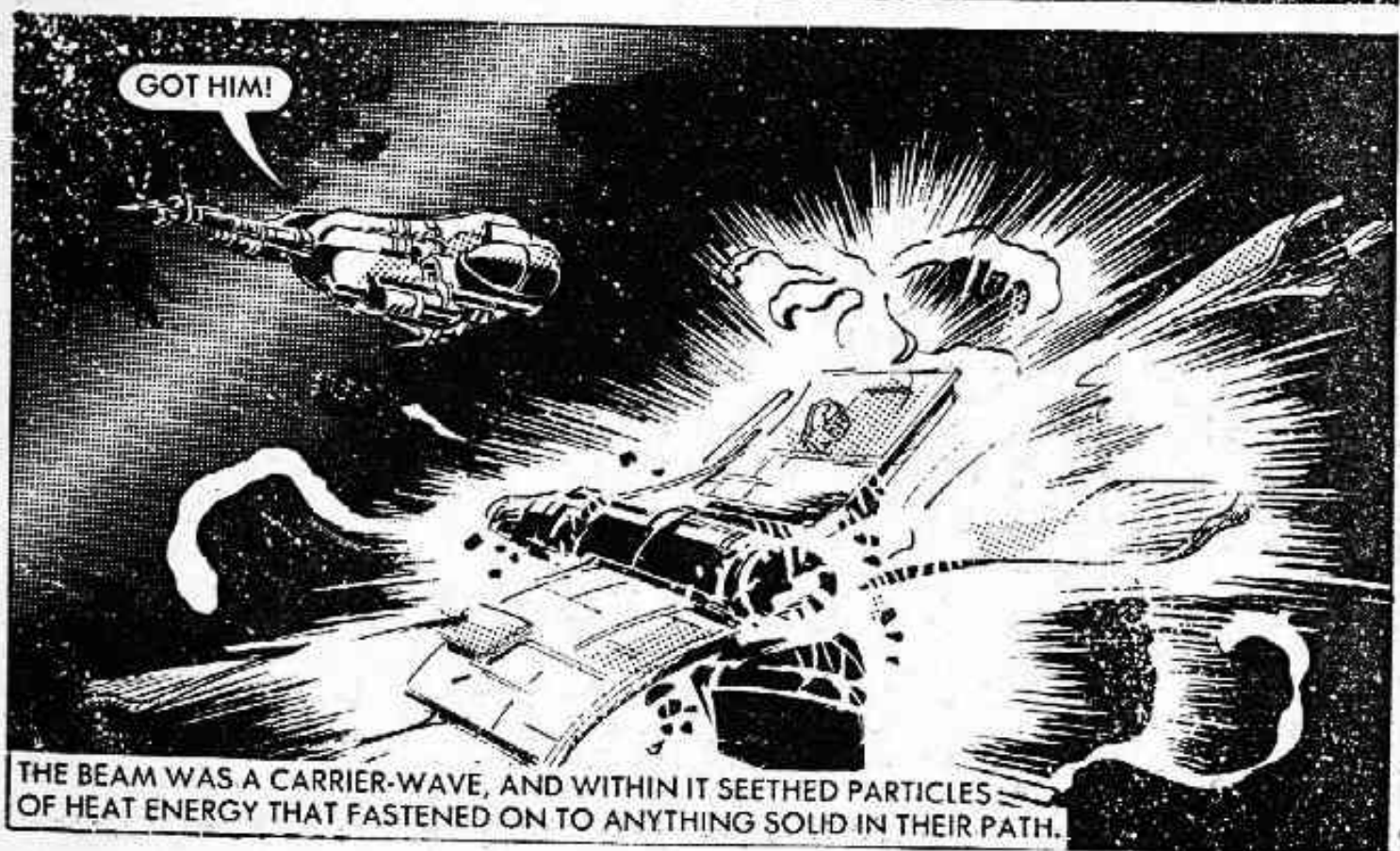
LUKE WENT IN TO THE ATTACK—



LUKE USED A TORCHER BEAM, WHICH BROADENED OUT TO ENCLOSE A CRAFT IN A PULSING FIELD OF HEAT.



IT'S WORKING  
ALL RIGHT.



GOT HIM!

THE BEAM WAS A CARRIER-WAVE, AND WITHIN IT SEETHED PARTICLES OF HEAT ENERGY THAT FASTENED ON TO ANYTHING SOLID IN THEIR PATH.

THE OTHER PIRATES WATCHED THEIR COLLEAGUES VANISH IN A SMEAR OF FLAME—

WHATEVER THEY ARE USING IS TOO MUCH FOR US TO HANDLE. BURNERS ON!



BUT ITS SPEED COULD NOT COMPETE WITH THE THRUST AVAILABLE TO THE SCORPION, WHICH SOON CAUGHT UP—

THEY'RE ON TO US!

GOT THEM!



MEANTIME, THE HEBUS CRAFT ENTERED THE FRINGE OF KNOWN SPACE, WHILE THE ROBOTS KEPT WATCH OVER THE CONSOLES.



HEAT IMPULSES FROM 92.K7. IDENTIFY.

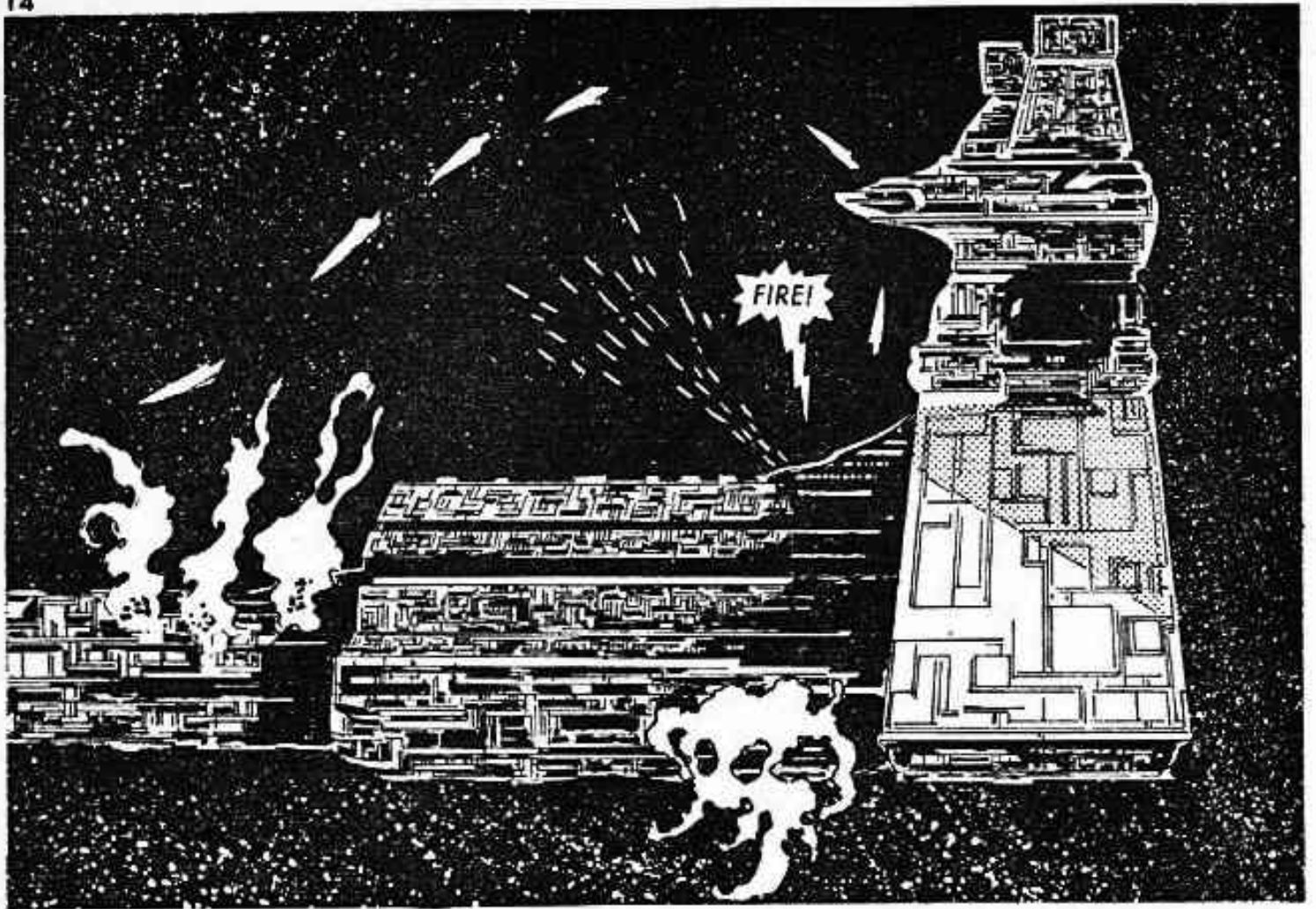
IMPULSES CLOSING. ARMAMENTS READY TO RETALIATE.

THE ATTACKERS WERE INHABITANTS OF THE PLANET NONABEL, WHO LIVED FOR WAR. ANYTHING THAT VENTURED INTO THEIR SPACE HAD TO BE IMMEDIATELY DESTROYED. AS THE ATTACK SHIPS STREAKED FOR THE HEBUS CRAFT, LANCES OF FIRE SMASHED INTO ITS MASSIVE HULL.



HOSTILE! DESTROY!

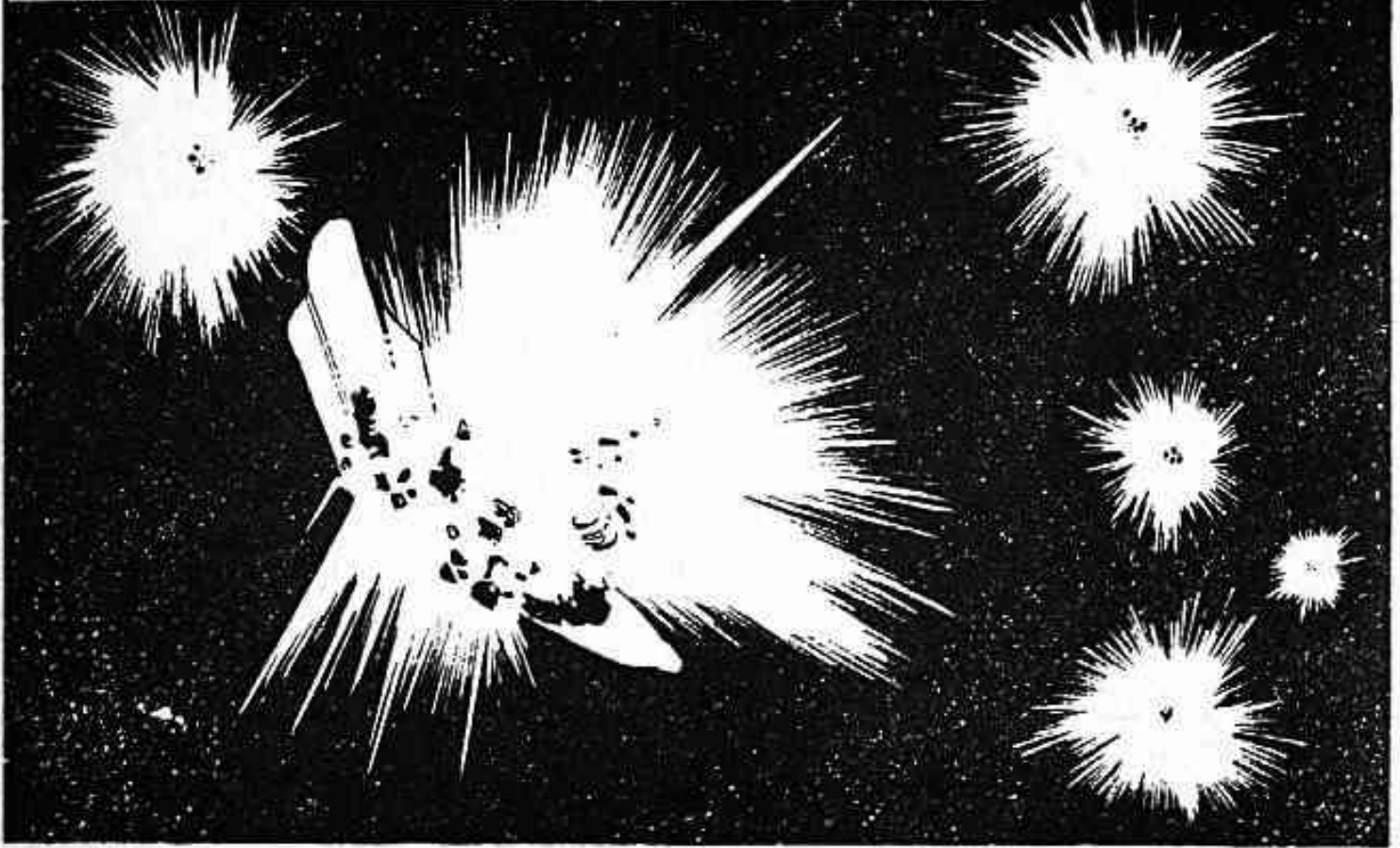
HIT THEM WITH EVERYTHING! THEY HAVE LET US GET TOO CLOSE.



THE SMALL DARTS OF FIRE SUDDENLY JOINED INTO A SERIES OF MASSIVE ARROWS THAT CRACKLED AND FUMED WITH FEROCIOUS ENERGY. ON BOARD A NONABEL CRAFT—



EACH "ARROW" FOUND A TARGET AND PIERCED ITS METAL HULL—



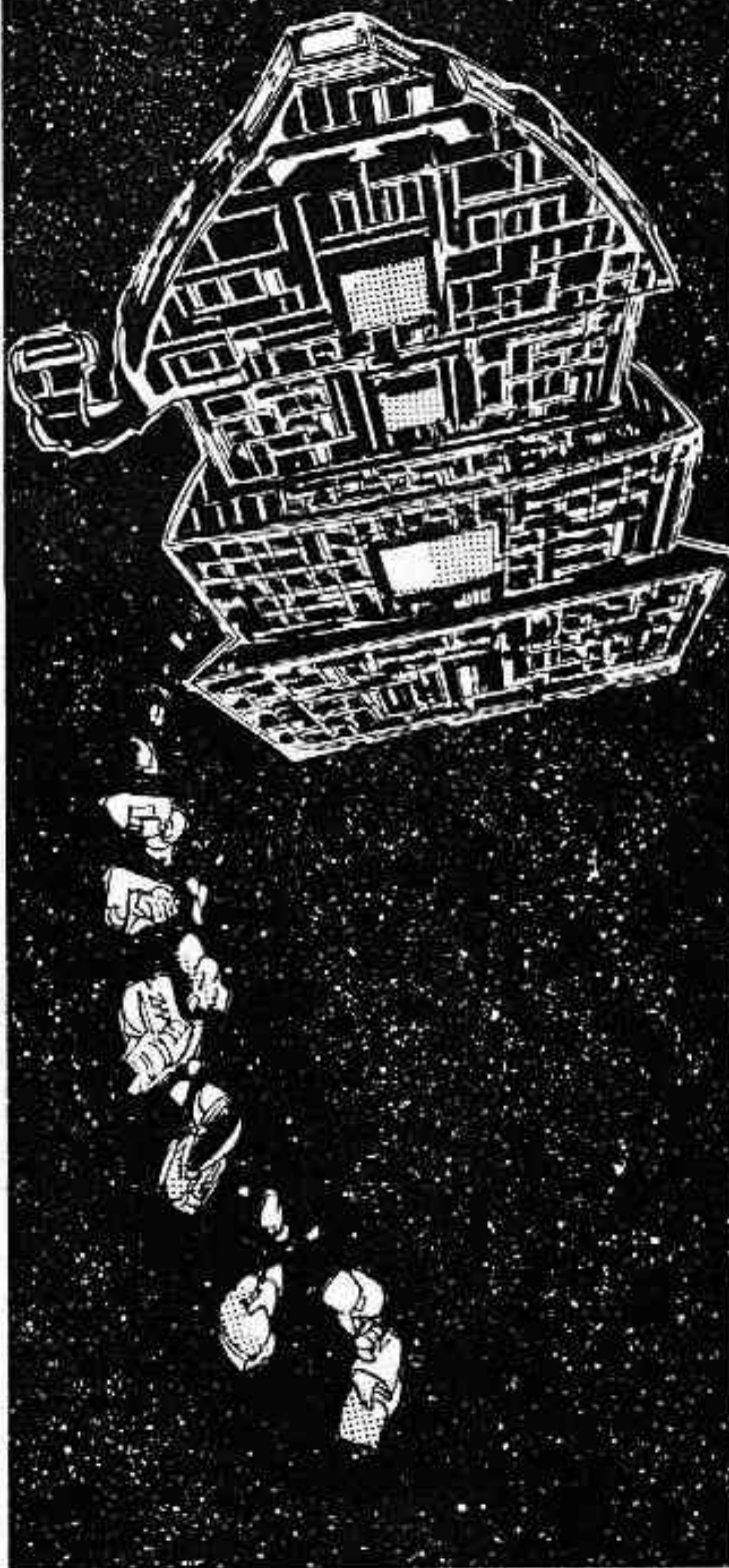
BUT THE HEBUS CRAFT DID NOT COME THROUGH THE SHORT ENGAGEMENT UNSCATHED—



THE ROBOTS HAD TAKEN THE BRUNT OF THE ATTACKERS' FIRE, AND NOW WERE FAR BEYOND THEIR OWN ABILITIES TO REPAIR.



REPAIRS WERE ATTEMPTED, BUT MORE ROBOTS BROKE DOWN. THE HEBUS CRAFT AUTOMATICALLY EJECTED REDUNDANT MATERIAL. IN ITS WAKE DRIFTED THE REJECTED HULKS THAT WERE THE KEY TO WAKING THE COLONISTS.





SO THE CHOSEN OF HEBUS SLEPT ON, EXCEEDING BY FAR THEIR RECOMMENDED PERIODS IN THE TUBES. RIMED IN ICE, THEY TOOK ON THE LOOK OF DEAD MEN.



AFTER AN ACHINGLY-LONG PERIOD OF TIME, THE SHIP BEGAN TO DETERIORATE. A WARNING CAME INTO EFFECT. AN AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION IN THE HEBUS LANGUAGE WAS EMITTED FROM THE CRAFT—THE SHIP'S DEFENCES WERE AUTOMATICALLY CUT OUT SO AFFORDING ENTRY TO ANYONE WHO ANSWERED THAT CALL.

CONSTANT PROBES FROM THE HEBUS CRAFT EVENTUALLY DETECTED EARTH. SCANNERS PROBED DEEP INTO THE PLANET, PRONOUNCED IT PERFECT FOR COLONISATION, AND SET A COURSE FOR IT.

LUKE . . . UNIDENTIFIED CRAFT MAKING FOR YOUR PATROL QUADRANT. IT IS TRANSMITTING, BUT WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE SO FAR TO TRANSLATE THE SIGNALS. PLEASE INVESTIGATE!

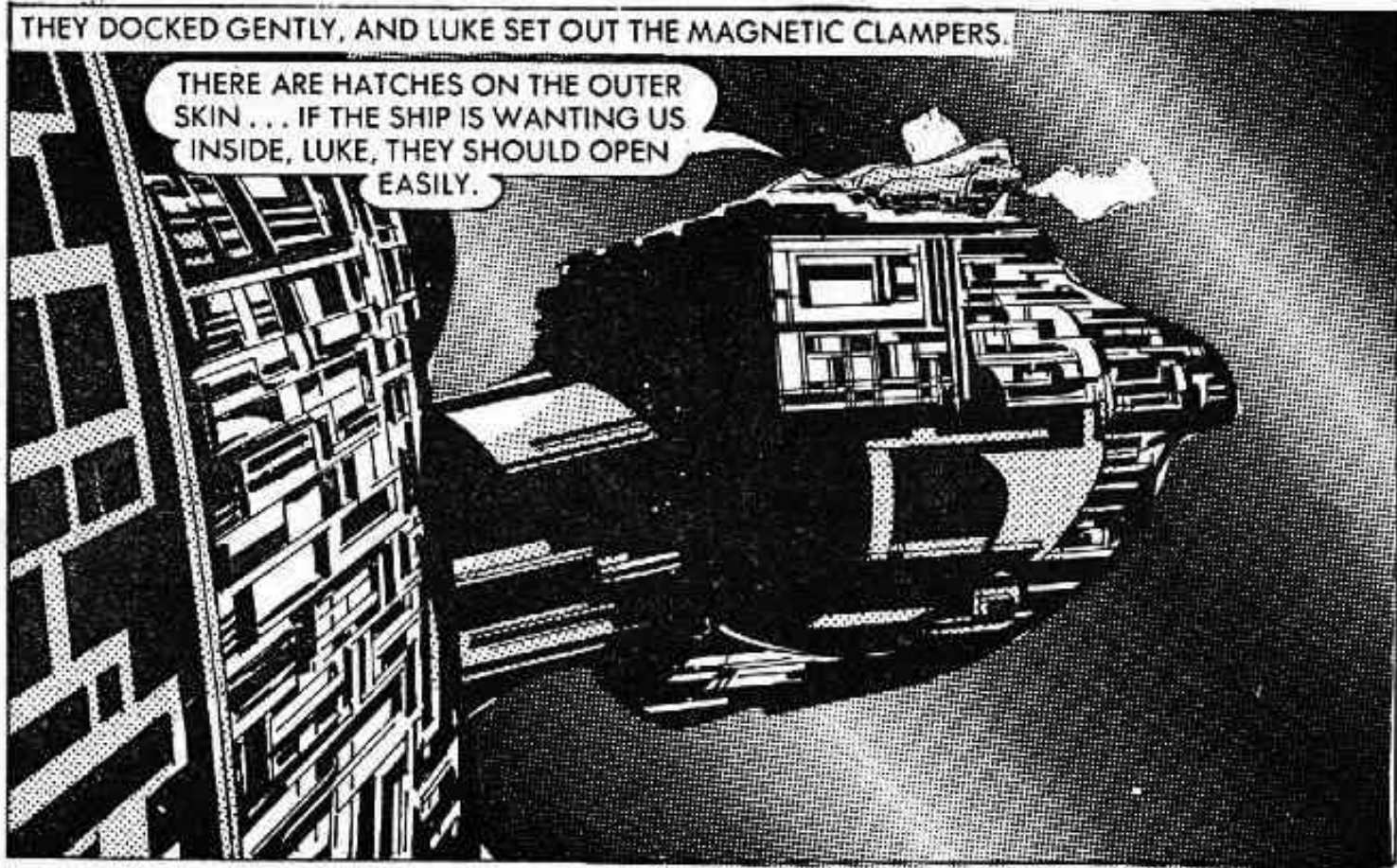
THE SCORPION IS ON ITS WAY TO TAKE A LOOK. OUT, CONTROL.



THE SCORPION DRIFTED CLOSE TO THE GIANT CRAFT—

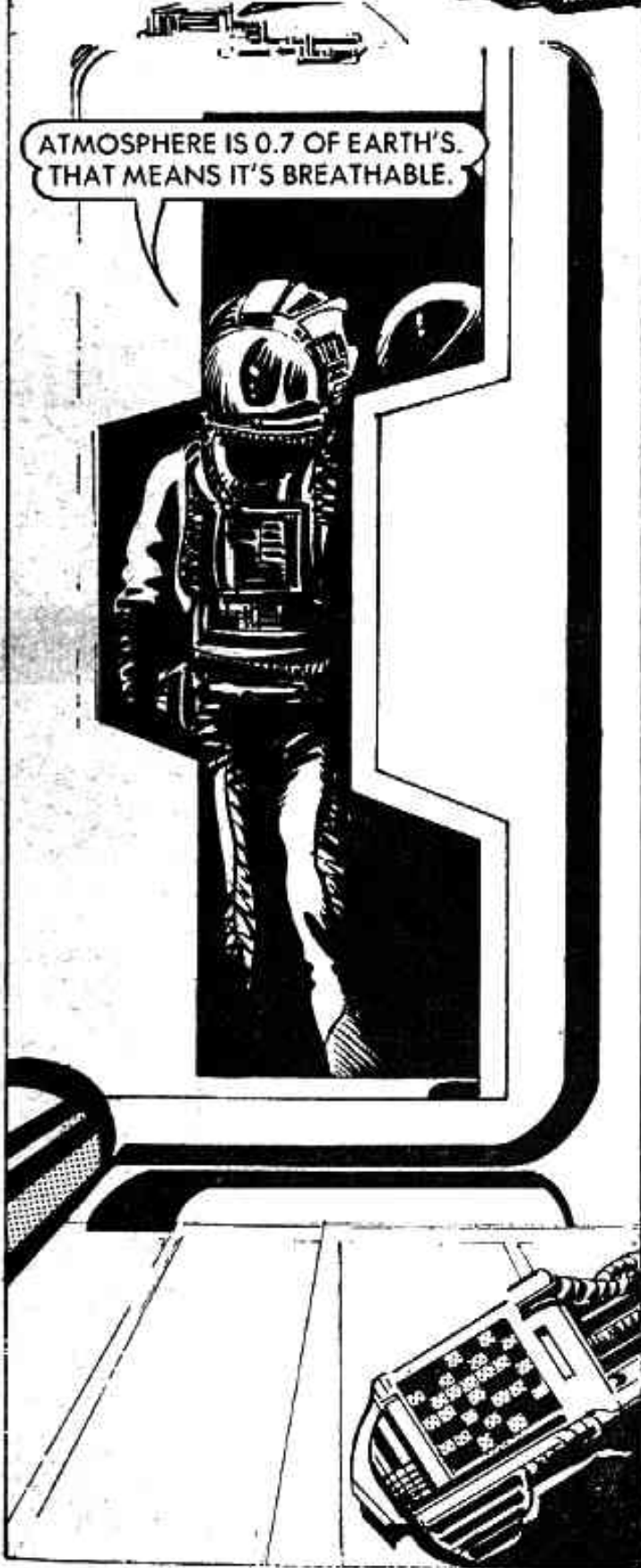


THEY DOCKED GENTLY, AND LUKE SET OUT THE MAGNETIC CLAMPERS.



WEARING THEIR SURVIVAL GEAR, THE TWO EARTHMEN CLIMBED DOWN INTO THE SHIP'S INTERIOR. AIRLOCKS SLID OPEN WITH NO ATTEMPT TO PREVENT ENTRY—

ATMOSPHERE IS 0.7 OF EARTH'S. THAT MEANS IT'S BREATHABLE.



LOOK AT THIS STUFF!

BUT WHERE ARE THE PEOPLE?





DON'T TELL ME WE'VE COME UPON  
A RACE OF ROBOTS!

NOT POSSIBLE! SOMETHING  
OR SOMEONE HAS TO INVENT  
ROBOTS!

EVENTUALLY THEY REACHED THE CRYOROOM —



HUMANOIDS! SOMETHING MUST  
HAVE GONE WRONG WITH THE  
AUTOWAKENING DEVICE SO WE'VE  
BEEN INVITED ABOARD TO USE  
MANUAL OVER-RIDE.

THERE'S NO WAY OF KNOWING IF  
THEY'RE HOSTILE OR NOT, BUT  
WE'LL HAVE TO RISK IT.



OKE . . . THESE CONTROLS ARE IN BINARY LANGUAGE WHICH MEANS THAT THEIR INVENTORS COME FROM AN EARTH-LIKE PLANET.

I WONDER HOW LONG THEY'VE BEEN LIKE THAT?



WHILE THE CRYO-UNITS SLOWLY THAWED LUKE CALLED EARTH TO DESCRIBE WHAT THEY HAD FOUND ON THE SHIP.

. . . SO THAT'S MOST OF THEIR STORED INFORMATION TRANSMITTED. DEREK SAYS THEY'RE LIGHT YEARS AHEAD OF US, TECHNICALLY.



LUKE AND DEREK WAITED, AND WHILE THEY DID SO, MANAGED TO RIG TRANSLATOR DEVICES. AFTER 12 HOURS THE FIRST SLEEPERS AWOK. USING THE COMMON BINARY LANGUAGE AND THE TRANSLATORS KRI AND HARA COMMUNICATED WITH DEREK AND LUKE —

WE ARE MUCH IN YOUR DEBT FOR SAVING US. ANY LONGER IN THOSE ICE TOMBS AND WE WOULD ALL HAVE DIED.

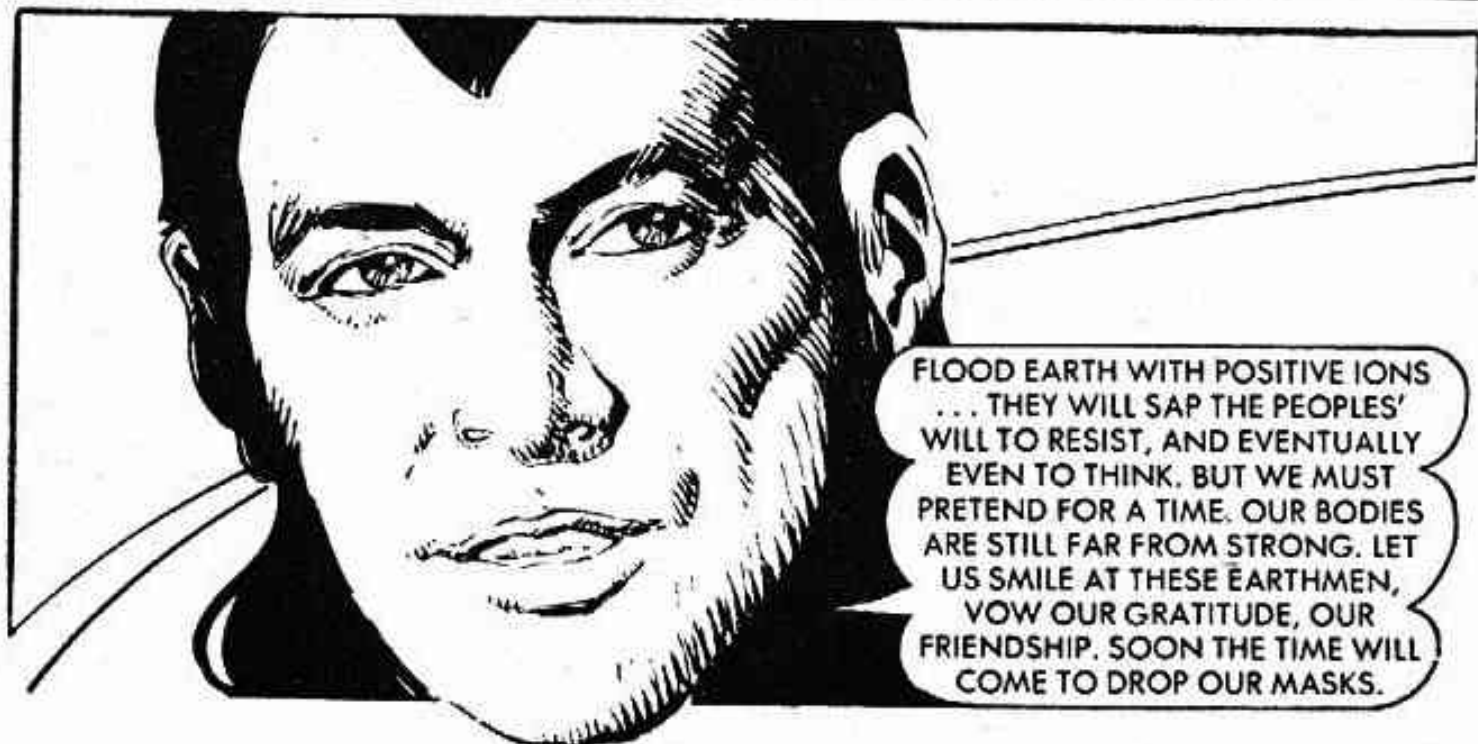
YOU'RE WELCOME! WE ARE OBVIOUSLY OF SIMILAR ORIGINS AND SHALL HAVE MUCH TO TALK ABOUT.

ONCE KRI AND HARA WERE ALONE A REMARKABLE DISCUSSION TOOK PLACE —



I EXPRESSED GRATITUDE TO THE EARTHMAN, BUT I FEEL NONE. IT SEEMS THAT THEIR PLANET WOULD SUIT OUR PURPOSES. FIRST WE MUST RID THE SURFACE OF THEM.

THAT SHOULD NOT TAKE LONG — THEY ARE PUNY, TECHNICALLY INFERIOR, AND TOO TRUSTING. IT IS OURS FOR THE TAKING.



FLOOD EARTH WITH POSITIVE IONS ... THEY WILL SAP THE PEOPLES' WILL TO RESIST, AND EVENTUALLY EVEN TO THINK. BUT WE MUST PRETEND FOR A TIME. OUR BODIES ARE STILL FAR FROM STRONG. LET US SMILE AT THESE EARTHMEN, VOW OUR GRATITUDE, OUR FRIENDSHIP. SOON THE TIME WILL COME TO DROP OUR MASKS.

MEANWHILE, ON BOARD SCORPION, STILL CLAMPED MAGNETICALLY TO THE HULL OF THE HEBUS SHIP —

YOU'VE ANSWERED AT LAST EARTH CONTROL! WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU TODAY — YOU SOUND HALF ASLEEP?

I JUST DON'T FEEL LIKE WORKING. CAN'T ALL THOSE FIGURES YOU WANT TO RELAY WAIT FOR A TIME?



WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH THEM? THEY'RE USUALLY ONLY TOO WILLING TO HELP!

UNAWARE THAT KRI WAS BOMBARDING THE EARTH WITH SAPPING POSITIVE IONS, HE PUZZLED OVER EARTH CONTROL'S LACK OF ENTHUSIASM.

LATER, HE MENTIONED HIS WORRIES TO DEREK.

FUNNY YOU SHOULD BE WORRIED! I'M UNEASY ABOUT THIS SITUATION. WHY DO I FEEL THAT WE'RE BEING USED IN SOME WAY?

RIGHT... LET'S HAVE A SNOOP AROUND.

SILENTLY THEY DESCENDED TO THE CYROGENIC RECUPERATION UNITS — !

I HAVE LONG KNOWN THAT YOU SEEK MY POSITION, HARA. YOUR FAMILY HAS ALWAYS BEEN JEALOUS OF MINE.

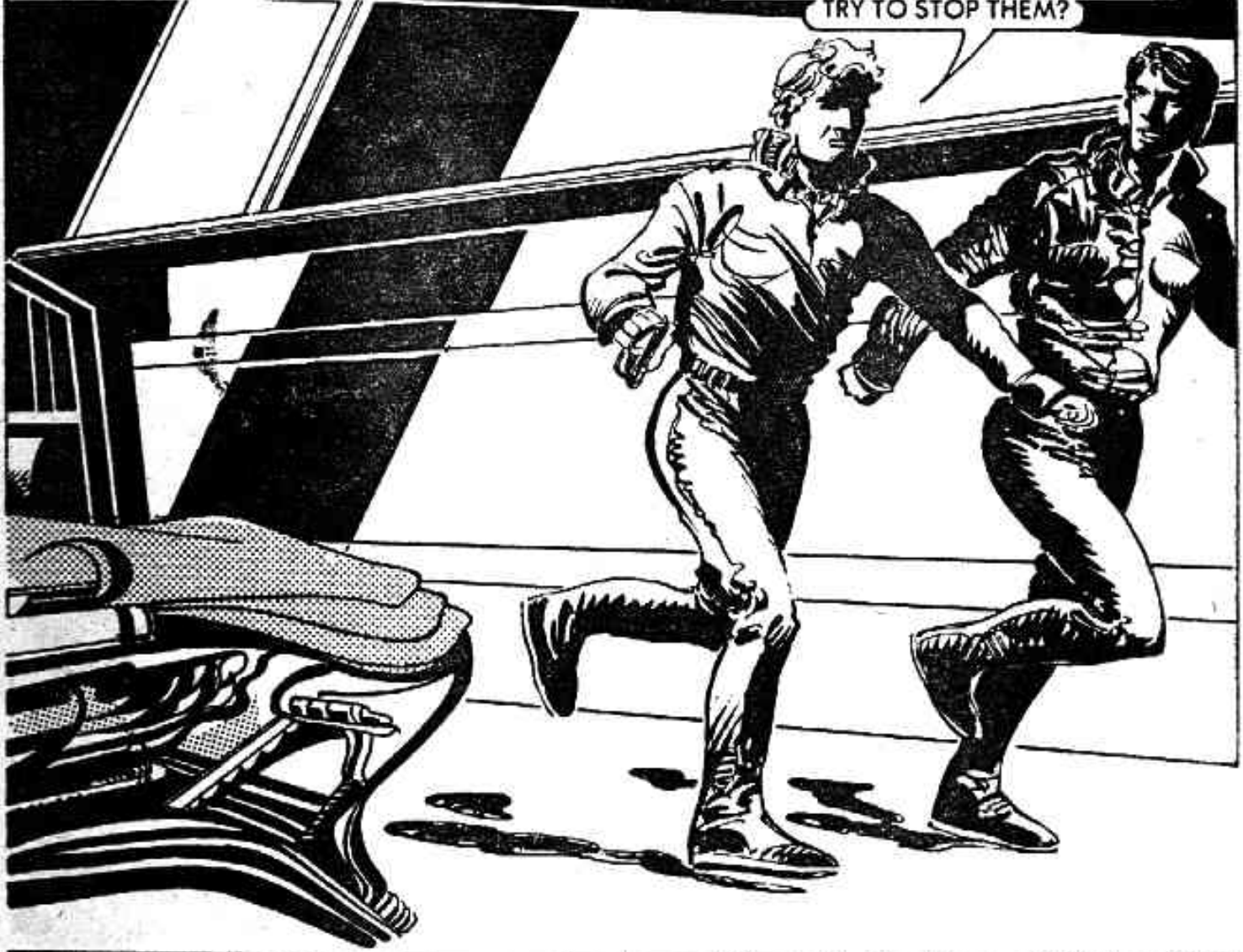
I KNOW WE WERE THE TWO RULING FAMILIES OF HEBUS, BUT AS MINE IS THE SENIOR IT IS YOUR DUTY TO OBEY ME. ANY SIGN OF NOT DOING SO AND I'LL KILL YOU!

AS YOU WISH, KRI. FOR NOW IT SUITS ME TO HELP YOU... BUT DO NOT PUSH ME TOO FAR. COME, WE MUST ELIMINATE THESE TERRANS.

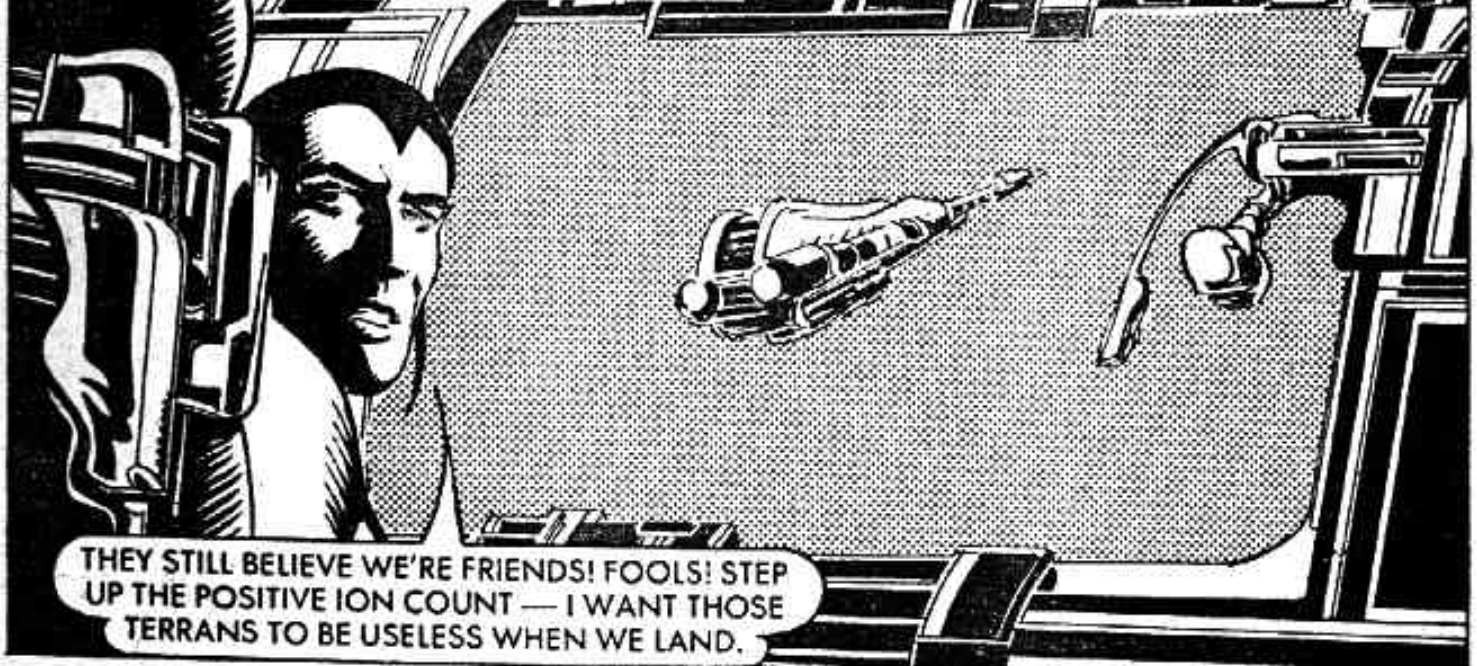


LUKE AND DEREK HAD HEARD ENOUGH —

LET'S GET BACK TO EARTH. WE MUST TRY TO STOP THEM?



MINUTES LATER, THE SCORPION BLASTED OFF —



THEY STILL BELIEVE WE'RE FRIENDS! FOOLS! STEP UP THE POSITIVE ION COUNT — I WANT THOSE TERRANS TO BE USELESS WHEN WE LAND.

BUT ON REACHING EARTH, WHEN THEY RELATED THEIR FEARS.



DEREK HAD NOTICED FROM A WRIST MONITOR, THE HUGE INCREASE IN POSITIVE IONISATION. THE ONLY ANSWER WAS TO FIGHT ALONE, SO THEY TOOK A TRANSCAR TO THEIR QUARTERS.



LATER, IN THE LABORATORY —

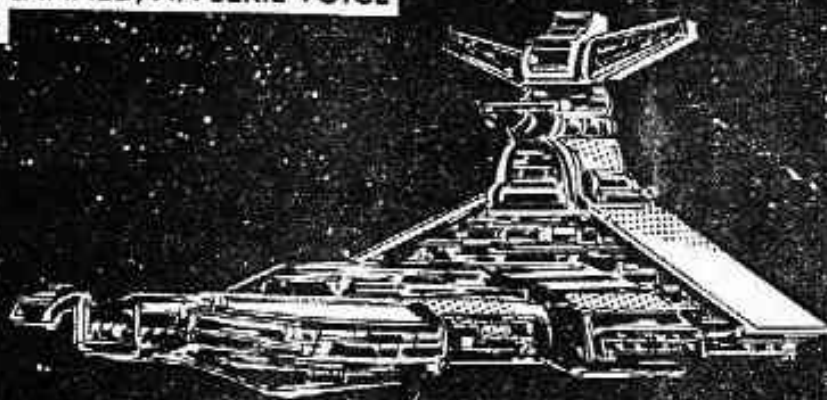
IN EFFECT JINANUM REVERSES THE  
HEBUS' ACTION.

BUT WHAT CAN WE DO TO STOP  
KRI AND HIS PLANS?

ONE THING FOR SURE . . . WE'LL HAVE  
TO GET BACK ON BOARD THEIR SHIP.  
MAYBE WE CAN SABOTAGE IT IN SOME  
WAY.

YES, BUT FIRSTLY I'M GOING TO GET SOME  
INFORMATION FROM MY TERMINAL. JINANUM IS  
MINED ON EARTH, AND THOSE IN CONTACT WITH IT  
WILL BE UNAFFECTED.

ONCE THE INFORMATION WAS GATHERED, THEY SOUGHT OUT AND BRIEFED THE MINERS. HURRIED PRECAUTIONS WERE TAKEN, BUT AS THEY PLANNED, AN EERIE VOICE CRACKLED —



... I AM KRI, YOUR NEW RULER. IT IS USELESS TO TRY TO OPPOSE US, FOR WE CAN CRUSH YOU WHENEVER WE FEEL LIKE IT. NOW, WE ARE GOING TO COME DOWN TO YOUR PLANET. WE WILL EXPECT TO BE RECEIVED WITH DUE CEREMONY. ALL VIDEO STATIONS WILL BROADCAST THE LANDING.

AS THE HEBUS SHUTTLE CRAFT DESCENDED, LUKE AND DEREK PREPARED A SURPRISE —

LOOKS LIKE WE'RE TOO LATE!





THE MINERS ARRIVED —

INTO THEM, BOYS!



WITH TOO MANY FELLOW EARTHMEN AROUND,  
THE MINERS COULD ONLY USE THEIR FISTS.



KRI FIRED HIS DRAWN BLASTER —

DOG!



DIE SCUM.

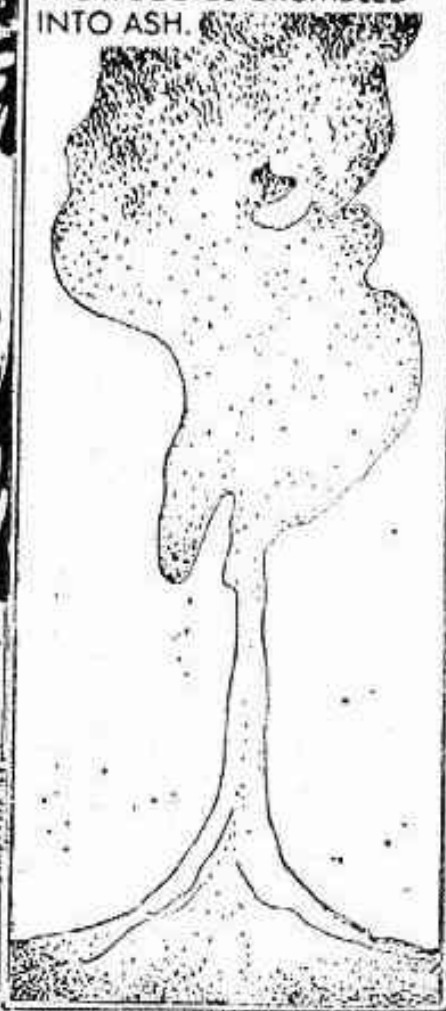




YOU DARE CHALLENGE  
YOUR SUPERIORS?

THE SHAFTS OF STRANGE COLD ENERGY SMASHED INTO THE MINERS. THEY FELT ITS IMPACT, BUT COULD NOT MOVE. THEIR BODIES WERE BEING CONSUMED BY A COLD AGONISING HEAT ...

... AND SECONDS LATER  
THEIR BODIES CRUMBLLED  
INTO ASH.





ONE MINER REMAINED ALIVE —

I CAN DO NOTHING AGAINST YOUR SUPERIOR POWER — I SURRENDER.



KRI SHALL NOT HAVE ALL THE ENJOYMENT ... IN OUR SOCIETY SURRENDER IS EQUIVALENT TO DEATH — SO DIE.



A CHOKING BLACK DUST CRACKLING WITH ENERGY CLOSED AROUND THE MINER —



THEN, A SUDDEN, VIVID EXPLOSION ENGULFED THE MAN'S BODY.





THAT FATE AWAITS ANYBODY WHO QUESTIONS THE AUTHORITY OF THE HARA, WARRIORS OF HEBUS!



LUKE, DEREK AND THE SURVIVING MINERS FLED —  
A MASSACRE! WE DON'T KNOW WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST.



THEY SPED AWAY —

KRI WILL HAVE LEFT MEN ABOARD HIS CRAFT TO PREVENT ANYONE GETTING IN. WHAT WE NEED IS A KEY ... PERHAPS WE CAN CAPTURE ONE OF THE SLEEPERS, USE HIM TO GET US ABOARD.

IT IS OUR ONLY CHANCE.

FOR A LONG TIME THEY WAITED THEIR CHANCE. AT LAST A LONE HEBUS WAS LURED INTO A TRAP.

GOT YOUR BOX OF TRICKS READY?

IT IS NOT A BOX OF TRICKS! IT IS AN IMPULSE IMITATOR — WHICH ELECTRONICALLY SCANS AND COPIES THE ELECTRICAL IMPULSES IN THE BRAIN.

GOT HIM!

HE'LL COME ROUND IN A MINUTE.



WHEN THE HEBUS REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS —

HE'S AWAKE ...

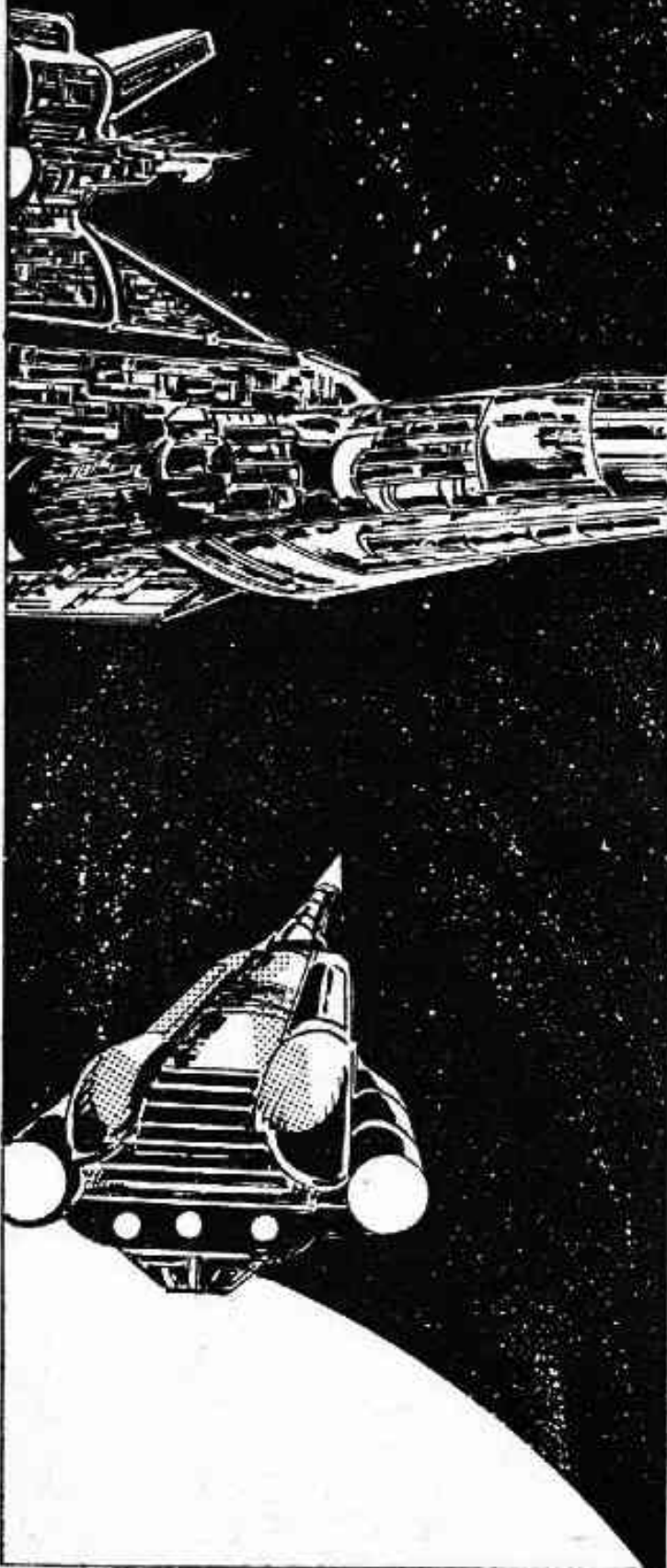
I...I...



IT'S WORKED! HE'S IN A TRANCE.  
WE CAN GIVE HIM ORDERS. YOU  
WILL FLY WITH US TO THE MOTHER  
CRAFT. YOU WILL TELL THE MEN  
ABOARD TO LET YOU IN. DO YOU  
UNDERSTAND?

I UNDERSTAND.

MINUTES LATER, DEREK, LUKE AND THE  
KIDNAPPED SLEEPER WERE STREAKING  
TOWARDS THE GREAT SHIP —



THE CAPTURED SLEEPER'S VOICE ALLOWED  
THE SCORPION TO ENTER A DOCKING HOLD.



IS HE STILL  
BEHAVING HIMSELF?

THINK SO . . . TROUBLE IS, I DON'T  
KNOW HOW LONG THE TRANCE LASTS.

ONCE DOCKED THEY RACED OUT,  
INTO THE CRAFT —



WE MUST GET DEEPER INTO THE SHIP,  
BEFORE THEY TWIG WHAT WE'RE UP TO.

SUDDENLY, THE TRANCE SHATTERED,  
AND IN A FLASH —



EARTHMEN ABOARD!

GRAB HIM!

BUT THE HEBUS DARTED THROUGH A SMALL DOORWAY AND VANISHED.

WE'VE NO TIME TO WASTE. WE'LL TAKE A LOOK AT THE MASTER CONTROLS AND FIND A WAY TO TURN OFF THOSE POSITIVE IONS.



THEY REACHED THE CONTROL LEVEL







YOU GET TO THAT CONTROL PANEL — I'LL HANDLE THEM.



DEREK DIDN'T HESITATE —

PERHAPS I CAN ACTIVATE THE ROBOTS . . . THEY'LL KNOW HOW TO OPERATE THE THING.



TURN OFF THE CONTROL THAT IS  
FLOODING THE PLANET WITH POSITIVE  
IONS.

**AFFIRMATIVE!**

LUKE WAS ALL BUT TRAPPED

I'M CORNERED, BUT AT LAST I'M  
GETTING THE HANG OF THIS HEBUS  
BLASTER.





LUKE UNLEASHED TWO MORE BLASTS.

CALL KRI... AAARGH!



THE TERRANS HAVE THE UPPER HAND.  
CONTACT EARTH TO INFORM KRI!

UNKNOWN TO ANYONE, THE DAMAGE  
BEING CAUSED TO THE SHIP BY THE MISSED  
SHOTS CAUSED WIRES TO STRETCH AND  
RUPTURE ... BREAKING COMMUNICATION  
LINES ... SHORT-CIRCUITING RELAYS.



ON EARTH, THE DESPERATE MESSAGE WAS RECEIVED —

A MESSAGE FROM OUR SHIP! THE ENEMY  
HAVE FOUND THEIR WAY ABOARD!

SO? WE HAVE MEN STANDING  
GUARD! CAN THEY NOT HANDLE  
THESE PUNY WEAKLINGS?

WE MUST RETURN!  
WITHOUT OUR SHIP WE ARE  
WEAKENED OURSELVES.

HOW DARE YOU QUESTION MY  
AUTHORITY! I AM PLACING YOU  
UNDER ARREST, HARA! YOU TAKE  
TOO MUCH UPON YOURSELF . . .

. . . NO! NOT ENOUGH! NOW I  
WILL TAKE OVER THE LEADERSHIP!

AIMING HIS STICK AT KRI, HE FIRED —



TREACHEROUS DOG!

!...!...



A FULL SCALE BATTLE BROKE OUT WITH  
SUPPORTERS OF THE RIVALS JOINING IN —

KILL THEM ALL! THEN THE  
SPOILS BELONG TO US, AND US ALONE!



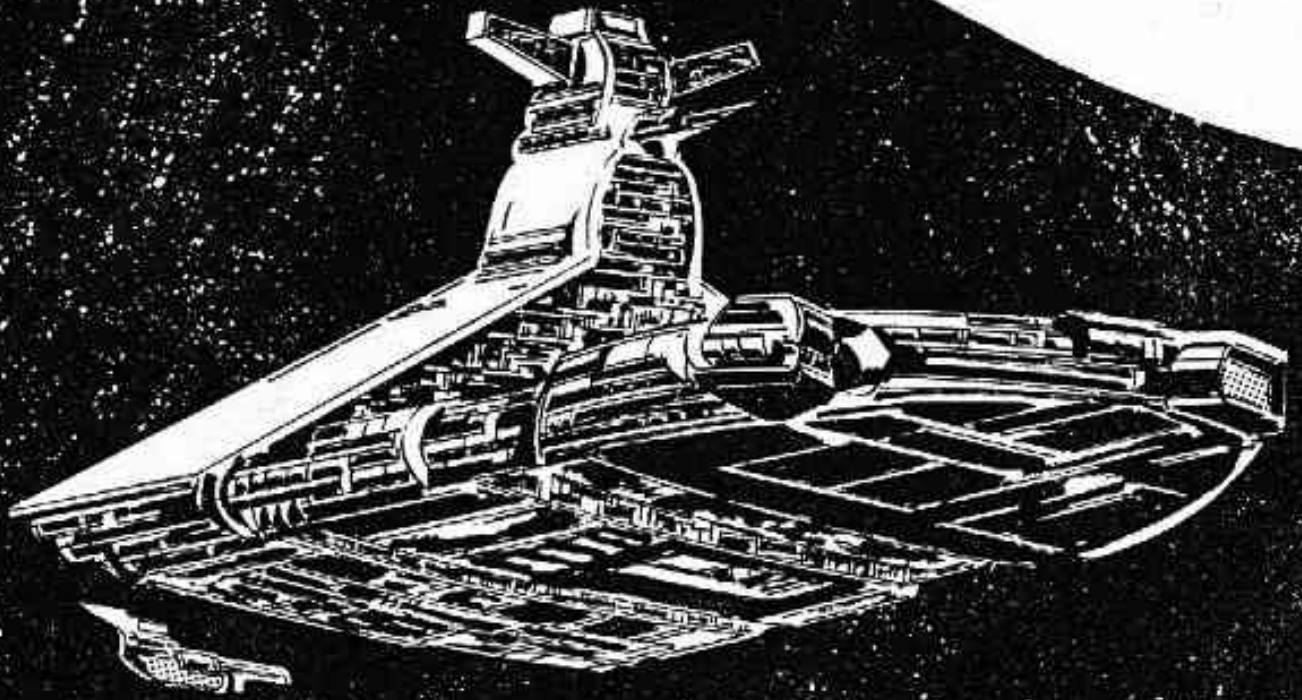
AFTER A SHORT, BRUTAL BATTLE —

IS IT DONE! I RULE NOW! YOU MEN,  
RETURN TO THE SHIP AND DESTROY THE  
INTRUDERS! THEN RETURN HERE!





THE HEBUS CRAFT COULD GET NO RESPONSE WHEN IT TRIED TO ENTER —



WHY DO OUR BROTHER HEBUS NOT ANSWER OUR CALLS?  
HAVE THE EARTHMEN CRUSHED THEM?

ONE REASON HAD JUST BEEN DISCOVERED BY DEREK —



ELECTRICAL BURNING!  
AND WHAT IS LUKE UP TO?

IN ONE OF THE CARGO HOLDS, LUKE WAS DOING WELL —

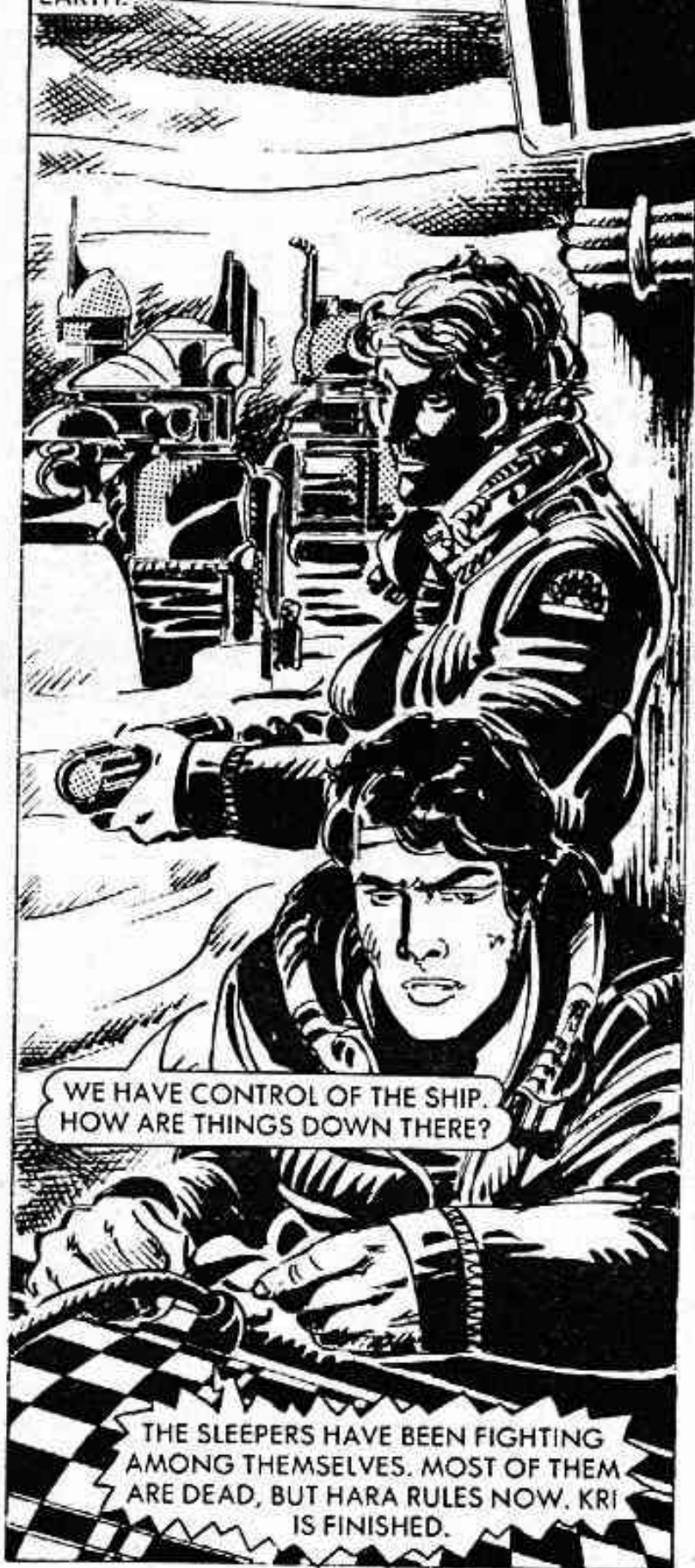
GOT HIM! NOW I'D BETTER GO AND SEE HOW DEREK IS COPING.

AS HE RACED TOWARDS THE CONTROL ROOM —

THE WHOLE SHIP SEEMS TO BE BURNING! MUST HAVE BEEN ALL THOSE MISSES THAT EXPLODED AGAINST THE WALLS.



THE TWO MET ON THE CONTROL DECK, AND LUKE CALLED THE MINERS WHO WAITED ON EARTH.



WE HAVE CONTROL OF THE SHIP.  
HOW ARE THINGS DOWN THERE?

THE SLEEPERS HAVE BEEN FIGHTING  
AMONG THEMSELVES. MOST OF THEM  
ARE DEAD, BUT HARA RULES NOW. KRI  
IS FINISHED.

NOW THAT EARTH WAS NO LONGER BEING  
FLOODED WITH POSITIVE IONS, PEOPLE  
BEGAN TO SHAKE FREE THE SAPPING  
INFLUENCE. PEOPLE CONVERGED ON THE  
BUILDING WHERE HARA WAS.



HARA IS IN THERE!

EVEN AS HARA SURVEYED HIS NEW KINGDOM, TWO MINERS MADE FOR HIM—





KILL THE DOGS!  
THEY HAVE HARA!



HARA, YOU HAVE  
NOT BEEN WOUNDED?

WOUNDED, NO! BUT I FELT THIS TERRIBLE  
WEAKNESS COME ON ME... I HAD  
THE STRENGTH OF A CHILD.

ON THE HEBUS SHIP, HARA'S ANGRY FACE APPEARED—

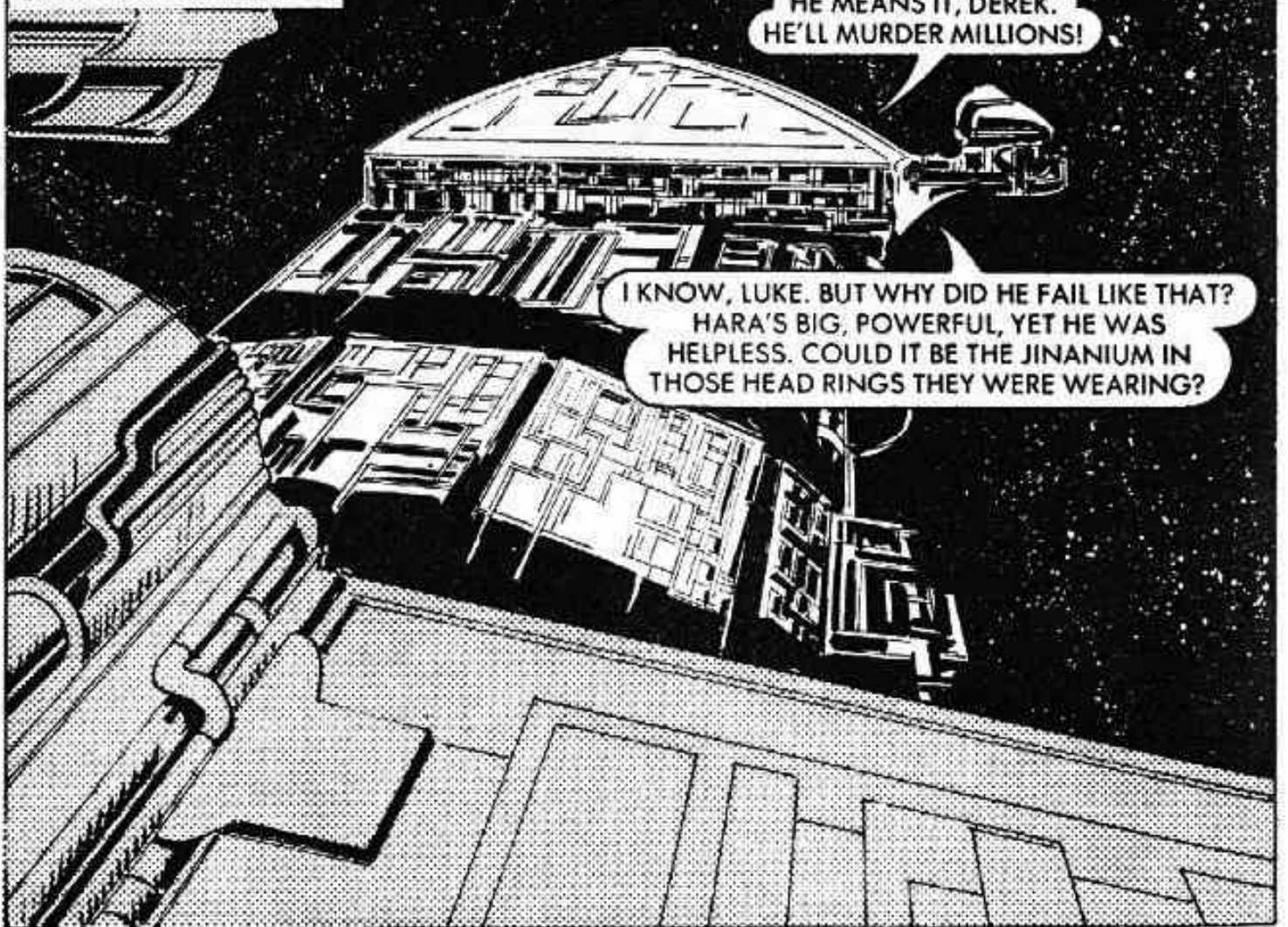
I ORDER YOU TO SURRENDER OR I SHALL  
SLAUGHTER YOUR ENTIRE RACE.



ON THE GREAT CRAFT, LUKE AND DEREK HAD WITNESSED THE WHOLE HORRIFYING EPISODE OF THEIR VIDEO SCREEN.

HE MEANS IT, DEREK.  
HE'LL MURDER MILLIONS!

I KNOW, LUKE. BUT WHY DID HE FAIL LIKE THAT?  
HARA'S BIG, POWERFUL, YET HE WAS  
HELPLESS. COULD IT BE THE JINANUM IN  
THOSE HEAD RINGS THEY WERE WEARING?





JINANIAM . . . HIGH ABSORPTION. EMITS LOW GRADE RADIATION, POISONOUS TO OUR SPECIES! IT HAS BEEN FOUND ON FOUR PLANETS IN THE GREGON SYSTEM, QUADRANT NINE, SECTOR THREE. POISONOUS! THIS QUADRANT HAS BEEN DECLARED OUT OF BOUNDS TO ALL OF OUR RACE.



LUKE HAD AN IDEA—

HARA, THIS IS LUKE. I'M ON YOUR SHIP AND CONTROL IT. YOUR MEN DIDN'T PUT UP MUCH OF A FIGHT—LIKE YOU, HARA! THOSE TWO EARTHMEN WHIPPED YOU EASILY, AND YOU KEEP TELLING US WHAT A FANTASTIC WARRIOR YOU ARE!

ON EARTH, HARA AND HIS MEN WHEELED IN SHOCK AS LUKE'S VOICE AND PICTURE CAME TO THEM.

HOW MANY CAN YOU KILL BEFORE YOUR BLASTERS RUN OUT? NOT ENOUGH! THEN THEY WILL RISE AND KILL YOU! YOUR ONLY CHANCE IS TO RECLAIM YOUR CRAFT—AND I DOUBT IF YOU'VE GOT THE COURAGE TO FACE US.

SCARED! BY HEBUS, THIS DOG MUST BE TAUGHT A LESSON!

UNAWARE THAT HIS PARENT CRAFT WAS ON THE POINT OF DESTRUCTION, HARA ROSE TO THE BAIT—


I AM COMING TO GET YOU! I'LL BLOW YOU INTO SMALL PIECES!

ON THE GIANT CRAFT—

WE'LL MEET THEM AMONG THE JINANUM DEPOSITS ON THE ALPHA ASTEROID BELT. I'LL LEAD THEM INTO THOSE DEEP CAVERNS. SINCE JINANUM RAYS CAN PIERCE THROUGH THE METAL OF THEIR SHIP, WE SHOULD BEAT THEM.

IF THEY DON'T HIT US FIRST! LUKE, THEIR SHIP MUST HAVE ENORMOUS FIRE-POWER ON IT... YES, EVEN THAT SMALL ONE. WE'LL HAVE TO WATCH IT!





LET'S GET OFF THIS SHIP BEFORE IT BLOWS UP. YOU OPENED THE LAUNCH BAYS?

YES, BUT HELP ME WITH THIS ROBOT, LUKE. I WANT TO TAKE IT HOME WITH ME. WHEN THIS CRAFT EXPLODES IT'LL LOSE SO MUCH ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY IT MAKES ME WEEP JUST TO THINK ABOUT IT. THE ROBOT WILL BE A HANDY CONSOLATION PRIZE.

THEY GOT OUT SAFELY, LEAVING BEHIND THEM AN OCEAN OF FIRE.

NOW FOR THOSE JINANUM DEPOSITS... I WANT TO GET THERE FIRST.

NO MORE THAN I DO. HARA AND HIS MEN ARE ALREADY ON THEIR WAY UP!

USING THE SCORPION'S FULL POWER, LUKE WAS THE FIRST TO REACH THE ALPHA ASTEROIDS, A MENACING AREA OF BLACK ROCK, TOWERING PEAKS, AND GAPING CHASMS.



THEY'RE COMING UP FAST, RIGHT ON OUR TAIL. BETTER DODGE ABOUT A BIT, LUKE.

ALTHOUGH HARA'S CRAFT WAS FASTER, LUKE MANAGED TO KEEP IT AT A DISTANCE WITH RANDOM COURSE CHANGES—



THERE THEY ARE! FIRE THE FORWARD STUNNERS!

ONCE AGAIN, LUKE TWISTED THE SCORPION OUT OF THE WAY.



ABOARD HARA'S CRAFT, THE SLEEPERS WERE BEGINNING TO FEEL THE EFFECTS OF THE JINANUM—A TIREDNESS SLOWLY CREEPT OVER THEM—

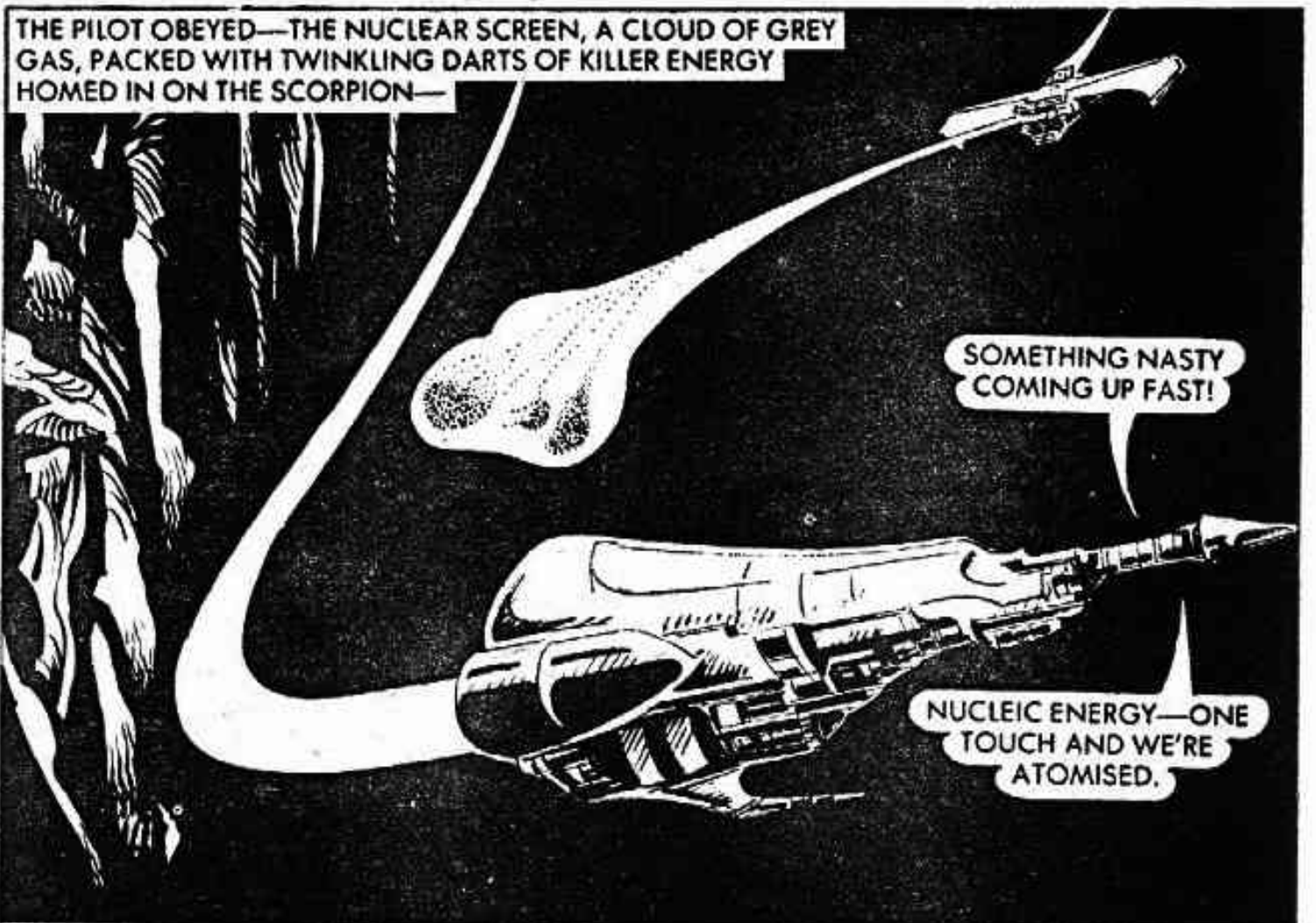


WE'RE IN A FIELD OF JINANUM ...

AND GETTING MORE TIRED! BETTER WAIT  
OUTSIDE THIS CURSED AREA—  
THEY CAN'T STAY IN IT ALL DAY.



THE PILOT OBEYED—THE NUCLEAR SCREEN, A CLOUD OF GREY GAS, PACKED WITH TWINKLING DARTS OF KILLER ENERGY HOMED IN ON THE SCORPION—



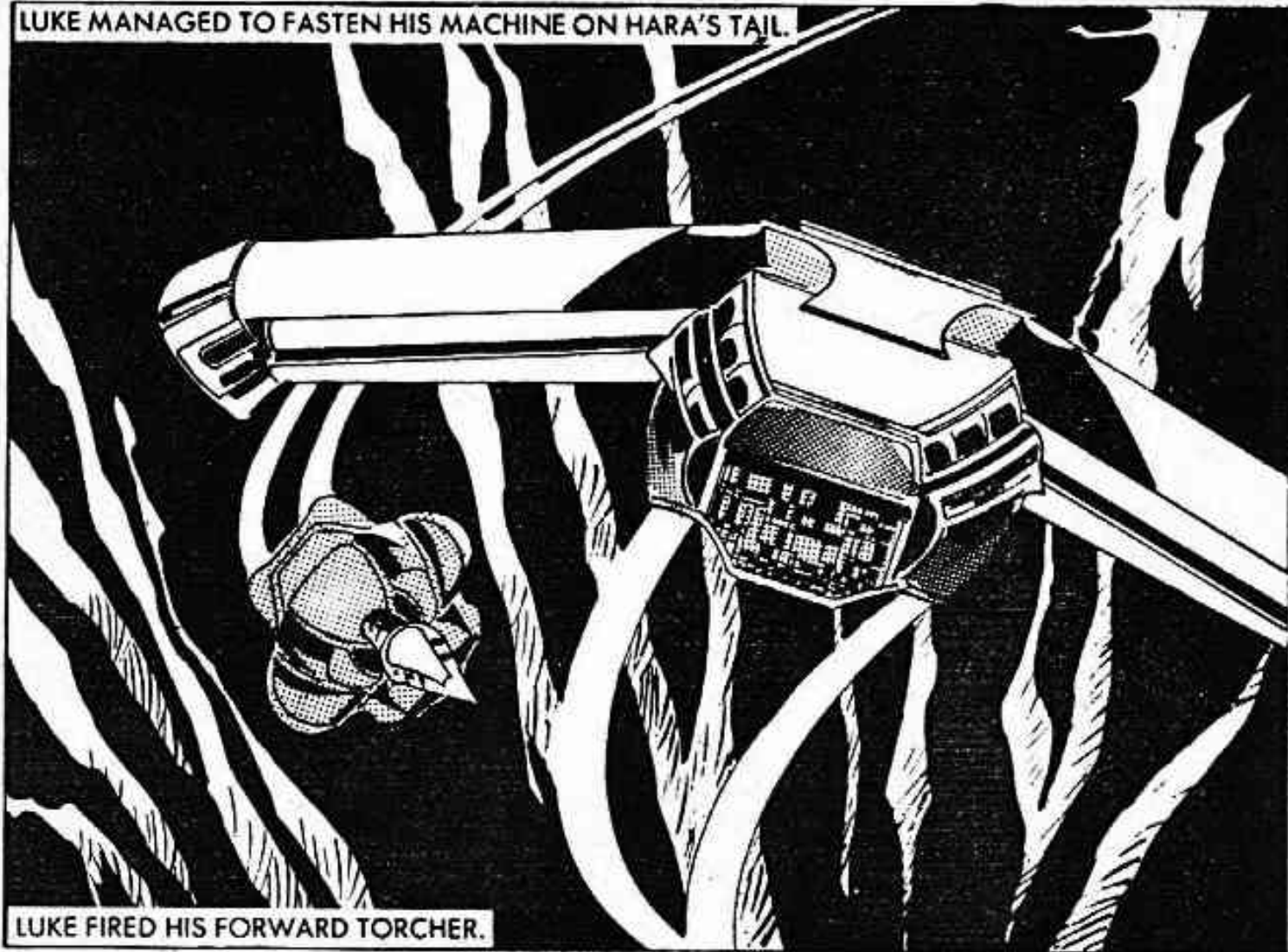
LUKE TURNED AWAY AS THE NUCLEAR SCREEN EXPLODED AGAINST A WALL OF SOLID ROCK. THE ASTEROID SHIVERED WITH THE FORCE OF THE IMPACT.



HARA WAS NEAR COLLAPSE HIMSELF, ONLY HIS HATE FOR LUKE KEPT HIM GOING.

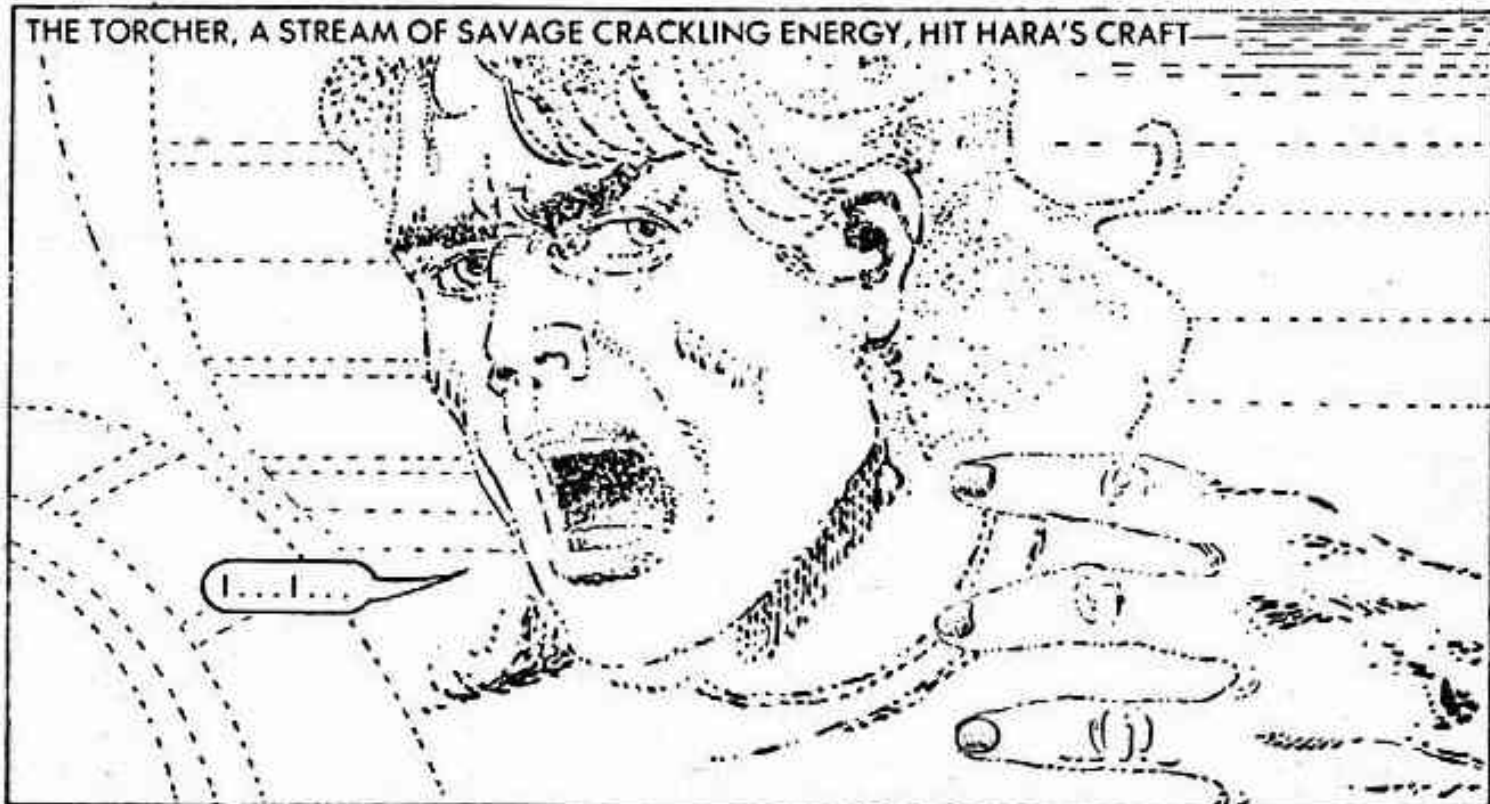


LUKE MANAGED TO FASTEN HIS MACHINE ON HARA'S TAIL.



LUKE FIRED HIS FORWARD TORCHER.

THE TORCHER, A STREAM OF SAVAGE CRACKLING ENERGY, HIT HARA'S CRAFT—



OUT OF CONTROL BECAUSE OF THE DIRECT HIT, HARA'S SHIP, TRAVELLING AT TOP SPEED, ARROWED STRAIGHT IN TO THE CHASM FACE—!



THE SHATTERED REMAINS OF THE CRAFT FELL HUNDREDS OF FEET TO THE FLOOR OF THE CHASM, AND PLUNGING AFTER IT CAME THOUSANDS OF TONS OF BROKEN ROCK.



THAT'S THE END OF HARA, THEN!

SAD, IN A WAY, FOR THEY KNEW SO MUCH THEY COULD HAVE TAUGHT US. CAN WE GET BACK TO THE BIG SHIP, LUKE? I WANT TO SALVAGE WHAT I CAN FROM IT BEFORE IT GOES UP?



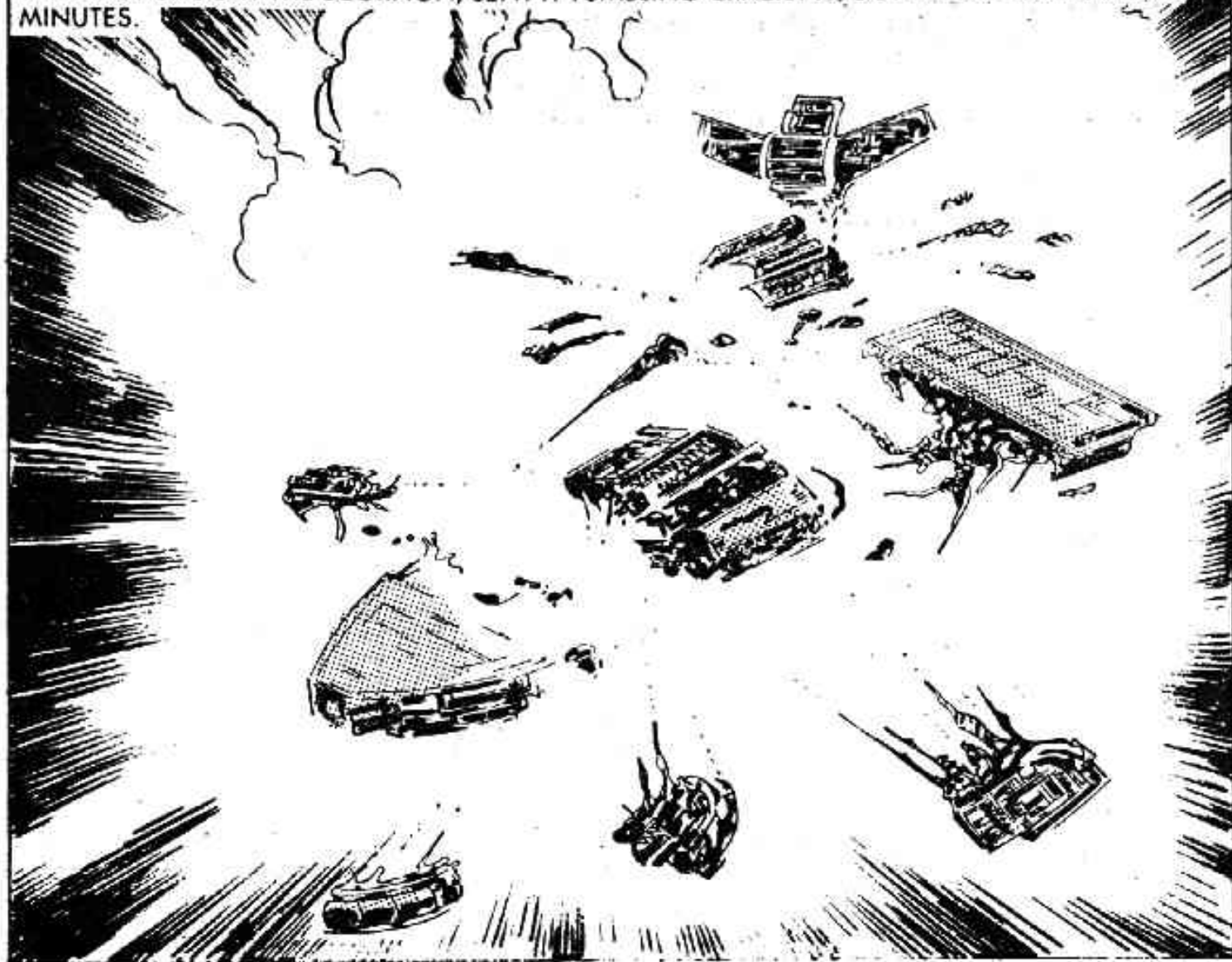
LUKE TURNED THE SCORPION, SENT IT STREAKING BACK TOWARDS THE GIANT CRAFT.



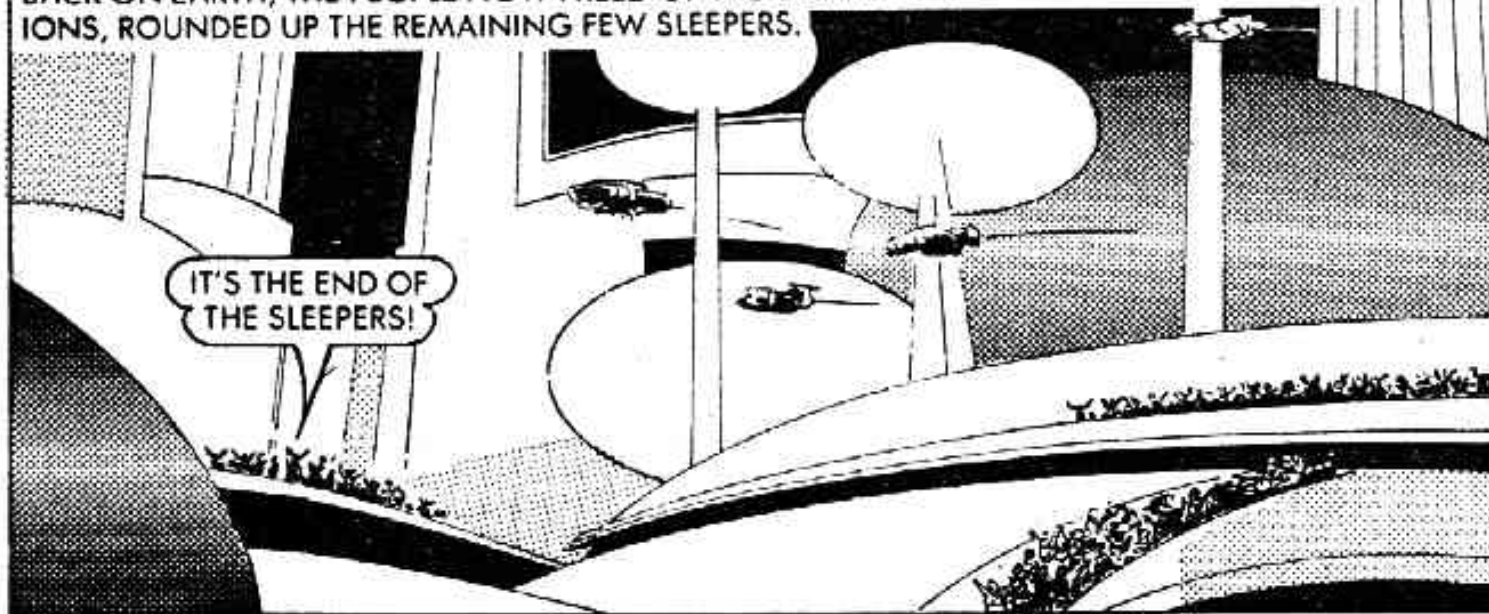
THEY WANTED TO DESTROY US TO HAVE EARTH TO THEMSELVES—MADNESS, WHEN THERE WAS ROOM ENOUGH FOR ALL OF US.




BUT THEY WERE TOO LATE. AS THE SLEEPERS' GIANT CRAFT CAME INTO SIGHT, IT BLEW UP! THE BLAST CAUGHT THE SCORPION, SENT IT TUMBLING CRAZILY ABOUT THE SKY FOR SEVERAL MINUTES.



BACK ON EARTH, THE PEOPLE NOW FREED OF THE WEAKENING EFFECTS OF THE POSITIVE IONS, ROUNDED UP THE REMAINING FEW SLEEPERS.





WE DESTROYED THE REMNANTS OF AN ALIEN RACE BECAUSE THEY WERE A THREAT TO US. WE DIDN'T REALLY TRY TO SEEK A PEACE, DID WE?

MAYBE NOT, BUT THE HEBUS DIDN'T WANT A PEACE... THEY WANTED EARTH WITHOUT PEOPLE, AND THAT IS PRECISELY WHAT WE JOINED UP TO STOP.

OUT IN DEEP SPACE SCORPION REVERTED TO NORMAL DUTIES, WATCHING OUT FOR THE MANY ALIEN RACES THAT LIVED OUT THERE, SOME WITH INFERIOR TECHNOLOGIES, OTHERS WITH ADVANCED CIVILISATIONS WHO COULD, WITH EASE, ARRIVE IN EARTH'S ORBIT AND DESTROY LIFE.

eldubya/iodinepriest

**DON'T FORGET THIS  
MONTH'S OTHER**

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LOCKED IN THE HULL OF A  
ROTTING CRAFT, DEEP  
UNDER THE OCEAN OF AN  
ALIEN PLANET, LIES A  
DEADLY THREAT TO THE  
EARTH EMPIRE. IT IS

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